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THEISTIC PROBLEMS

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THEISTIC PROBLEMS;

BEING

Essays on the Existence of God and His Relationship to Man.

BY

GEORGE SEXTON, M.A., LL.D.,

HONORARY AND CORRESPONDING FELLOW OF THE ITALIAN SOCIETY OF SCIENCE;
HONORARY MEMBER OF L'ACCADEMIA DEI QUIRITI, ROME;
AUTHOR OF
"THE BASELESS FABRIC OF SCIENTIFIC SCEPTICISM,"
"THE FALLACIES OF SECULARISM,"
"LIGHT IN THE CLOUD,"
ETC. ETC.

"Ab Jove principium Musæ: Jovis omnia plena:
Ille colit terras: illi mea carmina curæ."

VIRGIL.

London:

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,

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12-10-38

2-24-39 J.A.

PREFACE.

THE short Essays that follow form the substance of discourses delivered on various occasions. Requests to print each one separately have been frequently made to me, but I preferred to issue them together in a small volume. And thus they all—with the exception of the first one—appear in print now for the first time. "The Folly of Atheism" was delivered as a Lecture at Plymouth, on behalf of "The Christian Evidence Society," on October 18, last year, to an audience of considerably over a thousand persons. The chair was occupied on the occasion by the Rev. Canon Wilkinson, D.D. Lengthy reports, coupled with very high commendations of the discourse, appeared in the Plymouth and Devonport papers. On all hands I was solicited to print the Lecture, with which request I complied, issuing it in a separate form in the early part of the present

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year. "Worship and its Modern Substitutes," with some slight and unimportant variations, was preached as a Sermon in Stepney Meeting-house, on March 10, 1878; also on behalf of "The Christian Evidence Society." It formed one of a series of six discourses given on successive Sunday evenings, the other five being by leading Nonconformist ministers of various denominations. As far as I remember, the Rev. Dr. Kennedy, and the Rev. Dr. Angus, were of the number. "The Divinity that shapes our ends" was preached as a sermon in St. Mark's, Hartlepool, on October 29, last year, on behalf of the "Hartlepools Christian Defence Association." And the remaining two have been delivered as discourses in various churches in England and Scotland. They have all a bearing upon Theism in one form or another, and are intended to deal with some of the various phases of scepticism that abound at the present time. No one of the Essays can of course be considered exhaustive of the subject on which it treats, nor is it designed to be so. Their aim is to discuss summarily, and in a popular manner, some of the great problems that agitate men's minds in this age.

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In two previous works I have dealt with separate phases of modern anti-Christian thought, viz., Secularism and Utilitarianism, in my "Fallacies of Secularism;" and scientific unbelief, in my "Baseless Fabric of Scientific Scepticism." In the present book I take up another, that which relates to the "Existence of God and His Relationship to Man." My peculiar personal experience, added to the fact that I have now been for many years engaged in combating infidelity both on the platform and through the press, enables me to judge—more accurately perhaps than most men could—as to the nature of the doubts that so largely prevail in our midst in the present day.

My next volume—should I be spared to write another—will probably deal more directly with the Evidences of the Divine Authority of Christianity.

In the meantime, I pray for the blessing of Almighty God on this one, that it may be the means of turning many from darkness to His marvellous light.

GEORGE SEXTON.

LONDON, *July* 1, 1880.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE FOLLY OF ATHEISM	1
AGNOSTICISM—THE UNKNOWN GOD . . .	47
THE DIVINITY THAT SHAPES OUR ENDS . .	73
WORSHIP AND ITS MODERN SUBSTITUTES . .	97
ONE GOD, AND ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN	125

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—DENIAL OF GOD'S EXISTENCE . .	151
B.—INERTIA	152
C.—FORCE IDENTICAL WITH WILL . .	153
D.—ATOMS AND CHANCE . . .	154

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The Folly of Atheism.

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Νοῦν πάντα κοσμεῖν τὰ πράγματα διὰ πάντων ἰόντα.*—*Plato.*

"Quid potest esse tam apertum tamque perspicuum, cum cœlum suspeximus cœlestiaque contemplati sumus, quam esse aliquod numen præstantissimæ mentis, quo hæc regantur?"†—*Cicero.*

"The Eternal Will is the Creator of the world, as He is the Creator of the finite reason."—*Fichte.*

"The Laws of Nature cannot account for their own origin."—*John Stuart Mill.*

"Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
Portentous sight! the owlet Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,
Cries out, Where is it?" *Coleridge.*

* It is mind that puts all things in order, penetrating all.

† What can be so plain and evident, when we raise our eyes to heaven and contemplate the celestial bodies, as that there is some supreme, divine intelligence, by which all these things are directed?

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I.

THE FOLLY OF ATHEISM.

"THE fool," observes the inspired singer of Israel, "hath said in his heart, There is no God." The word here rendered fool is נָבָל, *nāh vāhl'*, and is derived from a root signifying to *wither*. It has doubtless a reference to the withering of the soul that a denial of God involves. In Psalm i. 3 we read of the godly man, "his leaf also shall not wither," where the same word is employed, signifying spiritual degeneracy, or the lowering of that part of man which raises him above the inferior creatures. The man who believes in God and delights in His law, shall not only bring forth fruit in abundance in his actions, but his leaf also—the embellishment of his character—shall not wither nor decline. When the Psalmist, therefore, would describe an Atheist, he speaks of him as one who is withered. His actions will be sterile, and his character barren. In all great and noble undertakings he will be unfruitful. And this has been the characteristic of Atheism in all ages of the world. It is cold, negative, cheerless, and gloomy, lacking enthusiasm, feeling, emotion, and sympathy.

The Atheist often complains that David, in calling him a fool, was guilty of a lack of courtesy. But truth is higher than politeness. Strong language is often justifi-

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able, and, as a rule, unbelievers are not slow to use it. They thunder and fulminate, pile up expletives in their language, and hurl abroad their anathemas like small Joves incensed with passion. David, however, does not use the term, translated fool, in an offensive manner. His meaning is, that the man who says, There is no God, is foolish; his spiritual faculty is withered; his reasoning powers are at fault; his intellect is defective on its higher side—the side that opens up Godward. He is destitute of that true wisdom which belongs to religion, and which can find its full expression only in Divine worship. Shakspeare says,—

> "God shall be my hope,
> My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet."

The Christian man who echoes this sentiment cannot but feel that he who lacks this hope, this guide and light, to illumine his path, walks in the darkness without a guide, and destitute of any solid ground for hope. His refusal to be thus led and cheered is, to say the least of it, unwise.

Not alone, however, are the spiritual perceptions of the Atheist withered and deteriorated, but his reasoning powers must be terribly at fault; for at every point to which we turn, the evidence of God's existence is overwhelming. This I shall now proceed to show.

Atheism must furnish us with some sort of a theory of the universe, or it can never satisfy a rational mind. When, therefore, the Atheist shelters himself—as he usually does—behind the statement that he affirms nothing, and cannot be logically expected to prove a negative, he takes a position which we cannot for a moment allow. For in his published works and oral

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discourses he does usually affirm a great deal; and the affirmations thus made require equal proof with those of the Theist. Besides, the human mind cannot rest in a mere negation. Thus, if Atheism be the true philosophy of the universe, it must prove itself to be so by boldly facing all the facts of existence, and giving us such an explanation of them as it is able to furnish. Unless it can do this, it can never satisfy a thinking, inquiring mind. The position taken by a certain modern school, that we should rest content with the facts of nature, and make no attempt to draw inferences from them, is absurd, and the task which it enjoins impossible. No sane man can long be content to contract his thoughts within the narrow boundaries of the region of sense, and to rest in the confines of the visible. Facts are valueless, except as far as they shadow forth a philosophy relating to that which lies behind them, and the business of which is to explain them and to trace their causes. Any attempt to drive back the human mind from this inquiry must inevitably fail, as it has always failed in the history of the past. As Professor Huxley has well said, "The term positive, as implying a system of thought, which assumes nothing beyond the content of observed facts, implies that which never did exist, and never will."* And even Herbert Spencer, who cannot be accused of any predilections in favour of Theism, remarks, "Positive knowledge never can fill the whole region of thought. At the uttermost reach of discovery there must ever arise the question, What lies beyond? The human mind, throughout all time, must occupy itself not only with ascertained phenomena and their relations, but also with that

* Lay Sermons, p. 178.

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unascertained something which phenomena and their relations imply."* Any system, therefore, to be worth a straw, must deal with that which lies beyond the domain of fact, and must be prepared to hazard some sort of a theory as to the why and the wherefore of things. Herein it is that Atheism has always broken down.

Theism asserts that there is a God. Atheism denies it; or, according to a more moderate form, denies that there is sufficient evidence for the affirmation† that God exists. In maintaining that there is a God, I may be asked to define what I mean by the term. This is not difficult: I mean the one Unconditioned, Absolute, and Infinite Existence, whose Divine wisdom planned, and whose almighty power created, the material universe and all that it contains. That something must be infinite is a truth which is axiomatic, and which, consequently, needs no proof, and is susceptible of none, because it is a necessity of thought. Something must have existed from all eternity, or there had still been nought; for *ex nihilo nihil fit.* "This," says Dr. Samuel Clark, "is so evident and undeniable a proposition that no Atheist in any age has ever presumed to assert the contrary; and therefore there is little need of being particular in the proof of it. For, since something now is, 'tis evident that something always was. Otherwise, the things that now are must have been produced out of nothing, absolutely and without cause—which is a plain contradiction in terms. For to say a thing is produced, and yet that there is no cause at all of that production, is to say that something is effected, when it is effected by nothing—

* First Principles, pp. 16, 17.

† *Vide* Appendix; Note A.

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that is, at the same time when it is not effected at all. Whatever exists has a cause, a reason, a ground of its existence—a foundation on which its existence relies, a ground or reason why it doth exist rather than not exist—either in the necessity of its own nature (and then it must have been of itself eternal), or in the will of some other being (and then that other being must, at least, in the order of nature and causality, have existed before it). That something, therefore, has really existed from all eternity, is one of the certainest and most evident truths in the world, acknowledged by all men and disputed by none. Yet, as to the manner how it can be, there is nothing in nature more difficult for the mind of man to conceive than this very first plain and self-evident truth. For how anything can have existed eternally—that is, how an eternal duration can be now actually past—is a thing utterly as impossible for our narrow understandings to comprehend as anything that is not an express contradiction can be imagined to be. And yet to deny the truth of the proposition that an eternal duration is now actually past, would be to assert something far more unintelligible, even an express and real contradiction."* Something, therefore, must have been eternal. That eternal something, whatever may be its nature, is infinite, at least in duration. This is, I take it, a point upon which the Atheist and the Theist are both agreed. Nor can that which is infinite in duration be limited in extent, for that supposition would imply an infinite existence with a finite attribute; or a finite existence with an infinite attribute; or some sort of existence combining in itself infinite and finite attributes, either of which is a contradiction of

* Being and Attributes of God; ninth ed., pp. 8, 9.

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terms, because it implies a finite infinity, which is as irrational as a square circle or a crooked straight line. The point, therefore, where a divergence takes place between the Atheist and the Theist is as to the nature of the one Infinite Existence.

In dealing with this question, we must start from facts, for with facts all thought must begin, but not terminate. Lord Bacon has well observed that "those who have handled science have either been men of experiment or of theory. The men of experiment are like the ant—they only collect and use. The theorists are like the spiders who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course; it gathers its materials from the flowers of the garden and the field, but transforms and digests them by a power of its own. Not unlike this is the true business of philosophy."* And it is this true principle of philosophy that must be followed in discussing the question before us. The material that we use in thought must be gathered from facts; but our decisions must rest with the legitimate inferences that are derived from these. All man's knowledge, according to Kant, begins with sensible experience; but all does not come from experience. Every fact has a meaning, sometimes lying very deep down in its nature; and this meaning has to be extracted if we would arrive at an accurate opinion. We must question the phenomena of the universe, in order to learn what they have to say of their causes, their relations, and their purposes. This may not always by an easy task, but it is a very essential one, if we would arrive at a correct conclusion. Sophocles remarks,—

* Nov. Organum; Aph. 95.

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"What's sought for may be found,
But truth unsearch'd for seldom comes to light."*

This is terribly applicable to many of the Atheists that I have known. Their minds appear to have been cast in such a mould that they can see nothing beyond the most palpable of material things. Hence facts have for them no meaning beyond that mere semblance which always appears on the outside.

Theology has usually been considered to occupy ground perfectly distinct from, and of altogether a different character from, that upon which Science finds her sure and certain footing. This notion is utterly incorrect. Theology is as much a science as geology or chemistry. The existence of God is as clear an induction from observed and recorded facts as the Copernican system of astronomy, the evidence upon which both are received being of precisely the same character. The Baconian principle of induction, which has furnished us with the true scientific method, consists in collecting all the facts that have any bearing on the subject, bringing these together, arranging and classifying them, so that they no longer stand out in disjointed isolation, but form one grand whole. This done, a law is inferred which shall cover the ground occupied by all the facts, and with which each one shall be in harmony. In the words of an anonymous writer in a Review: "Take astronomy as an example. In the heaven above us there are certain facts, or phenomena, which men could not fail to observe; as, for

* τὸ δέ ζητούμενον
Ἄλωτόν ἐκφεύγει δέ τἀμελούμενον.
Sophocl. Œd. Tyr., 110.

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instance, the rising and setting of the sun, the waxing and waning of the moon, the regular recurrence of the stars, at certain periods, along a fixed path or orbit. Merely to observe and record these facts was not enough for reasonable man. He was compelled by his very nature to reason—*i.e.*, to theorise—upon them, to seek for some law under which they might be ranged, for some cause to which they might be traced. He could not but ask, 'From what does the regular order and recurrence of these phenomena spring?' And after other answers to the question had been given and accepted for a time, he lit on that which satisfies him to this day, in the law of gravitation. This law is simply an inference, an hypothesis, a theory; but it accounts for the astronomical facts as no other theory does: and in this, therefore, at least for the present, and till some wider generalisation be reached, the inquisitive reason of man rests and is satisfied. Thus, from a multitude of effects, scattered through the universe, man has argued up to a cause, or law, to which they may all be referred." This is the method pursued in all branches of science, and it is the one which we follow in theology. Science is nothing but our reading of natural facts—our theory of the phenomena of the universe. We arrive at the hypothesis by arguing up from effects to their causes, or down from a cause to its effects. Now, if it can be shown—as I feel confident it can—that the existence of God is reached by this process, we thereby bring theology into the field of science, and establish its primal truth upon the same footing as gravitation or any other so-called natural law. And the Atheist who

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would overturn our theory is bound, in the first place, to show that our induction does not square with the facts, and, in the second, to give us a non-Theistic hypothesis which does.

In the physical universe, in the history of the human race, and in the innermost part of the being of each one of us, we find a multitude of facts which proclaim in language unmistakably plain that a God exists in whom all else has its being.

1. The material universe is conditioned and limited, and cannot, therefore, either in its parts or as a whole, constitute the Absolute and Unconditioned One. Everything that we recognise in the external world and in man is conditioned and limited. All the facts of nature with which we are familiar—indeed, all those of which we are capable of conceiving in matter—are interdependent, limited by and limiting each other. They constitute, in fact, what we call phenomena—a word which of itself, as every Greek scholar knows, means an appearance, and sustaining a relation to that which is substantial and underlying. A phenomenon cannot stand by itself. It has no meaning except in relation to a substantive, which is its subject and support. Says Ritter: "No phenomena could present themselves before us unless there existed something as their ground—something of which we can predicate these to be the phenomena. The very notion, therefore, of 'appearances' requires for its completion the 'correlative' notion of 'grounds' for these appearances, of which grounds these appearances are the predicates." Whenever, therefore, we think of phenomena, we are compelled by a stern necessity of the laws of thought to think of something upon which these pheno-

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mena depend, and to which they owe their origin. Limitation is an essential characteristic of matter in all its forms. We cannot conceive, if we try, of unlimited matter. Now, that which is limited, in the very nature of things, can neither be Infinite nor Absolute. Yet there must be an Absolute, since without the Unconditioned, nothing that is conditioned could exist; and there must be an Infinite, for it is one of the necessities of thought. We cannot even think it out of existence. The Atheist, then, is bound to tell us where and what is the Infinite and Absolute existence. He must either show some form of matter that is unconditioned and unlimited, which is, in fact, a contradiction in terms; or prove that there is no Absolute existence, which is, in truth, to deny all existence; or he must admit that the Infinite is something transcending all material things, which is to relinquish his Atheism. Follow closely the reasoning thus marked out, and you will see how truly spoke the great Sir Isaac Newton when he said, "The reasoning on to God lies properly within the domain of science. For it belongs to science, starting from phenomena, to stop not till it raise us to the hidden ground of these phenomena."

2. All the phenomena of the material universe consist of a series of changes which are also relative, limited, subordinate, and secondary. This being so, to what conclusion are we irresistibly driven by what Herbert Spencer calls "the momentum of thought," which leads us from the things as they appear to the why and how of their existence? The inference is as clear as that two and two make four, that there must be a Prime Mover from whom all these secondary movements spring. A

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consideration of this fact it was that led Aristotle to ascend from all observable movements and principles of motion up to what he calls the "principle of principles," the first "immovable mover," which "causes all things else to move." All movements that we see are conditioned by other movements. No single material thing with which we are acquainted can move itself, or stop itself when set in motion. There is no property of matter better known or more thoroughly established than that of *Inertia*,* or, as it is now called, *Mobility*. How, then, is motion caused? I do not mean secondary motion, but primary motion. Whence do all these subordinate movements have their origin? There is no primary movement in any material thing with which we are acquainted. Motion connected with phenomena cannot be eternal, for the phenomena themselves are transient and dependent. Professor Huxley has well said: "The very nature of the phenomena demonstrates that they must have had a beginning, and that they must have an end."† Every change that is observed in a body is caused by something exterior to itself.

Motion is now held to be caused by force, and all the manifestations of force in the material universe are resolvable into each other. Light, heat, electricity, magnetism, etc.—which were at one time supposed to be entities, and called imponderable bodies, from the fact that they were not subject to gravitation, and could not therefore be weighed—are now recognised as modes of motion. But what, then, we ask, is the thing called Force? Motion is a condition of matter, we are told. Yes; but how did it become conditioned, and what conditioned it?

* *Vide* Appendix; Note B. † Lay Sermons, p. 17.

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Force and motion are perfectly distinct. Take an illustration which I have given elsewhere.* A ball lying at rest upon the ground is set in motion. Now, what has happened? Motion has been imparted to that which was before at rest. It is the same ball in an altered condition. Nothing has been added by the movement, and nothing taken away. The motion simply implies that the ball has changed its place. But something must have operated to cause the motion, or the rest had never been interrupted. That something we call force. Force, then, is known to us as the ability to produce certain changes in matter. It is the name given to that which originates motion, or changes the state of a body with regard to motion. And this force is not, and cannot be, an attribute of matter. If I am asked why, I reply, because we have already seen that one of the best known properties of matter is *Inertia*, which is the direct opposite of the capability of causing motion. Inert matter can possess no spontaneous power: it can neither move itself nor effect any change in itself, whether in motion or at rest. Nor can motion, *per se*, produce motion. It is a fundamental axiom in physics that motion cannot be generated by motion itself, but only by force. Inertness and energy, activity and passivity, are contradictory attributes, and cannot, therefore, be affirmed of the same thing. Any one who says that matter is inert, and yet at the same time maintains that it can exert force, uses words without meaning, and consequently talks nonsense. Herbert Spencer remarks: "Force is the ultimate of ultimates. Matter and motion are differently conditioned manifestations of Force. And Force can be regarded only as a

* *Vide* Baseless Fabric of Scientific Scepticism, p. 122.

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certain conditioned effect of the Unconditioned Cause—as the active reality indicating to us an Absolute Reality by which it is immediately produced."* Force, therefore, cannot be an attribute of matter, for it moulds and fashions matter. It is higher than any material existence. The entire physical universe is under the control of Force, and, but for it, must sink into a state of torpor, inactivity, stagnation, and death, or possibly even cease to be. Force, therefore, not being in matter, must be sought for in mind, and in mind alone. Spirit force is the only force possible in the universe. The doctrine that mind is the originator of motion is as old as the hills. Νοῦς μὲν ἀρχὴν κινησέως, says Anaxagoras. And all modern science is tending marvellously in the direction of this truth. Motion transformed in multiform ways, and transmitted through a thousand media, always commences in mind or spirit. Dr. Carpenter observes: "The deep-seated instincts of humanity, and the profoundest researches of philosophy, alike point to mind as the one and only source of power." † And a far greater man, Sir John Herschel, remarks: "The conception of Force as the originator of motion in matter without bodily contact, or the intervention of any intermedium, is essential to the right interpretation of physical phenomena; . . . its exertion makes itself manifest to our personal consciousness by the peculiar sensation of effort, . . . and it [force] affords a point of contact, a connecting link between the two great departments of being, mind, and matter—the one as its originator, and the other as its recipient." ‡ All

* First Principles, pp. 235-6.

† Nature, vi., p. 312.

‡ Familiar Lectures on Science, p. 467.

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the various forms of energy which we see manifested around us in the ten thousand phenomena of nature are simply so many transformations of one force, springing from the one source of power, the Divine Will. It can hardly be necessary for me here to enlarge upon the doctrine of the unity of Force and the conservation of Energy, which modern science has brought so conspicuously to the front, since no one who knows anything of science will have the temerity to dispute it. Each mode of motion can be converted into the other, —heat into light, electricity into magnetism, and all into momentum. This is not theory, but demonstrable fact. In order to make the matter more clear, however, I may give a simple illustration as detailed in the Lecture Notes of Dr. Meyer. He says: "The heat developed by the 'falling force' of a weight striking the terminals of a compound thermal battery (formed by pieces of iron and German silver wire twisted together at alternate ends) caused a current of electricity through the wire, which, being conducted through a helix, magnetised a needle (which then attracted iron particles), caused light to appear in a portion of the circuit formed of Wollaston's fine wire, decomposed iodide of potassium, and finally moved the needles of a galvanometer." Here, then, we have kinetic energy converted into heat; then absorbed heat transformed into electricity; that again converted into magnetism, light, and chemical force; and so on. All the forms of energy or modes of motion are thus reducible to unity—in fact, to one force. "Electricity and magnetism, heat and light, muscular energy and chemical action, motion and mechanical work, are only different forms of one and the same power. . . . More-

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over, chemical union of the elements of matter, the attraction of gravitation in all the bodies of the universe, are but varied forms of this universal motive force." (*Dr. Cohn.*) Now, the question that arises is, What is the origin of this one Force? From what source does it spring? There is but one answer. It owes its origin to mind. In human experience force invariably springs from volition. The intermediate agents between the will and the last thing observed to move may be numerous; but this in no case alters the fact that, tracing the links of the chain upwards to its origin, we come in the end upon volition.* Dr. Carpenter—who certainly has no bias in favour of Christianity—remarks: "Force must be regarded as the direct expression of that mental state which we call Will. All force is of one type, and that type is mind."† And the same view is advanced by Herschel, Wallace, Laycock, Murphy, and many other of the leaders of scientific thought. Even Herbert Spencer—who is usually claimed by Atheists or Agnostics as belonging to their school—is compelled to concede almost all that I am here contending for. He says: "The force by which we ourselves produce changes, and which serves to symbolise the cause of changes in general, is the final disclosure of analysis."‡ Force, therefore, is of mind, not of matter. It is an expression of Will, and an attribute of spirit.§ We are driven, consequently,

* *Vide* The Baseless Fabric of Scientific Scepticism. Discourse on "God and Immortality," where this argument is worked out at considerable length.

† Human Physiology, p. 542.

‡ First Principles, p. 235.

§ *Vide* Appendix; Note C.

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by the irresistible force of logic, to the conclusion—the only rational one—that the mind, which is the cause of all motion in the varied phenomena of the physical universe, is the ever-present mind of God.

> "For how should nature occupy a charge,
> Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
> So vast in its demands, unless impelled
> To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
> And under pressure of some conscious cause?
> The Lord of all, Himself through all diffused,
> Sustains and is the life of all that lives."

3. Each part of the material universe shows itself to be an effect, and must, therefore, owe its existence to a cause outside of itself. The Atheist cannot point to a single object in physical nature which does not bear upon it the marks of having been caused by some power exterior to itself. Suns and stars, and trees and flowers, and rolling waters, the violent tornado and the soft gentle zephyr, the thunderstorm and the dewdrop, the pebble stone on the sea-beach and the mightiest range of mountains on the earth, the colossal mammoth and the tiny animalcule that disports itself in a drop of water, all cry out, "Not in me will you find the cause of existence." No; material nature is simply a series of effects—nothing more. Even man himself, the highest of all created things, feels that he owes his existence to *somewhat* or to *some one* higher than himself. It has been well said by one: "We are not sufficient of ourselves—not self-originated, nor self-sustained. A few years ago, and we were not; a few years hence, and our bodies shall not be. A mystery is gathered about our little life. We have but small control over things around us; we are limited and hemmed in

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on all sides. Our schemes fail, our plans miscarry. One after another our lights go out. Our realities prove dreams. Our hopes waste away. We are not where we would be, nor what we would be. We find that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. We find our circumference very near the centre, everywhere. And we feel an irresistible tendency to refer all things, ourselves with them, to a power beyond us, sublime and mysterious, which we cannot measure, nor even comprehend." Where, then, is the cause of all things, ourselves included? It cannot be found in material nature, for no part of the universe could cause itself, much less something besides itself. Every individual thing that we see, declares itself to be an effect. Where, then, and what, is the cause? This is the question which no Atheist can answer—the problem before which materialistic science bows its head abashed. Atheism, and its twin sister Agnosticism, hang up a curtain here, and exclaim, "We don't know what is inside;" while in truth our own consciousness extends both within and without. Mr. John Stuart Mill,* while admitting that the material universe is continually changing in all its parts, and that whatever changes must be an effect, yet thinks that there is a permanent element in Nature which does not change, and may be therefore the cause. But what is this permanent element? You will perhaps be surprised to hear that it is Force. How this statement can help the Atheist out of the difficulty of his position, one fails to see. For I have already shown that Force is not matter, nor an attribute of matter—nor, in fact, of matter in any sense of the word. The permanency of Force, therefore, but

* *Vide* Essay on Theism.

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proves the permanency of mind, and that in mind, and mind alone, can an efficient cause of material things be found. All matter is an effect, whose cause must be other than material; and this cause is God.

Atheists are constantly babbling of Nature, as though by the use of a word—which they often employ in a very loose and vague sense—they got rid of all difficulty in connection with this question. What is meant by Nature? Unless we have a clear and definite meaning in our minds that we attach to this word, its use is not likely to help us much. The term Nature, it seems to me, is very often used in a most ambiguous sense, even by scientific men. At one time it is employed to denote the totality of all existence; at another, to describe the causes or conditions of things; at another, the relations of phenomena; and sometimes all these collectively. Such use of language is likely to land us in inextricable confusion. According to the derivation of the word Nature (*Natura—Nascitur*), it means that which is born or produced—in point of fact, the becoming. In this sense, therefore, it had a beginning and will have an end. It is solely phenomenal, and consequently its cause must be sought for outside of itself. That which becomes, or begins to be, cannot be the cause of itself, but must be a consequence of antecedent conditions. Nature, therefore, as the sum total of phenomena, is an effect, and as such requires a cause. And here, again, we are driven to something beyond Nature. There can be no phenomena—and Nature consists simply of phenomena—without change, no change without motion, no motion without force, and no force without spirit, for spirit-force is the only force in existence. Thus are we led by various lines of thought to the same conclusion.

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"None of the processes of Nature," says one of the most eminent scientific men of this age, "since the time when Nature began, have produced the slightest difference in the properties of any molecule. We are, therefore, unable to ascribe either the existence of the molecules, or the identity of their properties, to the operation of any of the causes which we call natural. On the other hand, the exact quality of each molecule to all others of the same kind gives it, as Sir John Herschel has well said, the essential character of a manufactured article, and precludes the idea of its being eternal and self-existent. Thus we have been led, along a strictly scientific path, very near to the point at which Science must stop. Not that Science is debarred from studying the external mechanism of a molecule which she cannot take to pieces, any more than from investigating an organism which she cannot put together. But in tracing back the history of matter, Science is arrested when she assures herself, on the one hand, that the molecule has been made, and on the other that it has not been made by any of the processes we call natural." * Thus Nature is an effect, a phenomenon, a manufactured article; in other words, a creation. And her Cause and Creator is God.

4. That which is not the result of thought cannot be translated into thought; and as the universe displays thought in every part, it must be the work of a Supreme Thinker. Take a book in your hand, open it, and you see at once the orderly arrangement of letters into words, and of words into sentences. This bespeaks a certain amount of thought on the part of the author, and on the

* Professor Clerk Maxwell: President's Address, British Association, 1870.

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part of the compositor who sets up the type. By no stretch of imagination can you conceive this arrangement to be the result of chance or accident. The types might have been thrown down at random ten million times, and they would never have fallen into the order in which they were placed in the printer's form which was laid on the machine, when a single sheet of the volume was worked off. The book in question may not be a treatise on a very important topic, and the author may have dealt with his subject very imperfectly, but still it is impossible to imagine that the arrangement can be other than the result of mind. A volume of Shakspeare, of Newton, or of Kant, will differ greatly from an elementary school-book, or from the immature production of an ignorant and uninformed man; but the difference will, after all, be one of degree only: in both cases thought must have been at work to produce a book at all. Chance is incompetent to form a single sentence, to say nothing of writing several hundred pages. And the amount of thought contained in the volume will be the measure of what can be extracted from it. In other words, you cannot get more thought out of a thing than has been put into it. You may get out less, because your mind may be incompetent to grasp all the meaning of the author; and in that case you may misunderstand him through failing to reach his profundity. But whether his thoughts be deep or shallow, there will be no question in your mind, when you see his book, that the presence of the thinker has been there. Now if thought can be extracted from the material universe—in other words, if order and harmony can be detected,—it is as certain that mind has been at work, as that the book before referred to was produced by an

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intelligent being. And that such order does prevail, I take it, no one will deny. For what is all our science but a reading of Nature, with a view to discover the meaning of her forces and her laws? All investigation and all experiment is but an attempt to fathom the meaning of the mysterious language that has been so deeply engraven on her multiform pages. Again and again has Nature been most aptly compared to a book; and a marvellous volume it is, in which we may read

> "The perfect hand
> That poised, impels, and rules the whole."

Everywhere in the physical universe we see order, harmony, and symmetry, indicating purpose and plan.

We hear much talk of Natural Law. But this is another of those terms which are so often used in both a loose and an ambiguous sense. The words "laws of nature" hang most glibly on the lips of those who hardly know the meaning of the expression. Such people speak of laws as though they were powers, forces, or even entities, whereas they are nothing more than observed orders of sequence. A law of nature is not an entity, neither is it a power; it can do nothing whatever. It is simply the mode of action of a force that lies behind it—that is all, and hence must not be referred to as though it were capable of producing results. As a modern poet has said, addressing Deity,

> "The laws of Nature are but Thine,
> For Nature! who is she?
> A name—the name that men assign
> To Thy sole alchemy!"

The more wonderful the workings of Natural Law, the more astounding becomes the power which lies behind

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the law, by whose volition the law itself was called into being. As has been well and wisely said, "All things—plants, animals, men; sun, moon, and stars; even storms, comets, meteors, with whatever seems most erratic—fulfil the law of their being. This law they did not impose on themselves, for they cannot repeal it, though they often rebel against it; it is imposed on them by a superior power, a power which rewards obedience and avenges disobedience. Man, for instance, is obviously under a law of health, against which he often sins, but which he cannot annul, however painful may be the results of his disobedience to that law. And so throughout the natural world we find a law independent of the will of the creatures, superior to them, supreme over them, capable, as we say, of asserting and avenging itself. Whence does this law come? and who administers it? For, of course, no law can really administer or assert itself. There must be some one behind and above the law. Law is only our name for a sequence, for a method of action, for a right or an invariable method. It implies the existence of a power or person whose method it is, whose will it expresses. The laws of nature can no more administer themselves than the laws of the land. Just as the laws of the land imply the existence of an authority, a magistrate, who will act on them and assert them, so the laws of nature bear witness to an unseen force, or power, or person, who imposes and enforces them, rewarding those who obey, punishing those who violate them. This power we call God." Let such men as Matthew Arnold term it a "stream of tendency, by which all things fulfil the law of their being," and thus lose themselves in the fogs that their own language has called into existence;

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we prefer to keep in the bright sunlight of clear ideas, and to call it God. A stream, whether of tendency or of anything else, must have its origin somewhere. We know of no "stream" which does not flow from a source. And the only source of natural law is the Divine Law-maker, who is at once the giver and the administrator of the law.

The distinguishing characteristic of the physical universe is that the laws by which it is governed are mathematical relations. Gravitation is a numerical law, and under its influence the curves described by the heavenly bodies are the ellipse, circle, parabola, and hyperbola—that is, they all belong to the class of curves called conic sections, the properties of which occupied the great mind of Plato thousands of years before Newton demonstrated that whatever was true of them might be transferred to the heavenly bodies. Many of the geometer's *à priori* laws were first suggested by natural forms; and others, as Euclid's division in extreme and mean ratio, were afterwards discovered to be embodied in the universe. I have not time here, nor is it necessary, to explain these laws. They are known to every mathematician. Suffice it to say that natural symmetry leads us to investigate, first, the mathematical law which it embodies, and then the mechanical law which embodies it. Thus all the benefits that the race has derived from the pursuit and discovery of physical science have come to us through the suggestions of geometrical thoughts in the universe. "Now, all regularity of form," says a modern writer, "is as truly an expression of thought as a geometrical diagram can be. The particles of matter take their form in obedience to a force which is acting according to an

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intellectual law, imposing conditions on its exercise. It does not alter the reality of this ultimate dependence of symmetry upon thought, simply to introduce a chain of secondary causes, between the original thinking and the final expression of the thought." A geometrical figure, whether drawn by a piece of chalk upon a black board, or engraved on a block of wood and printed in a book, or making itself apparent in natural phenomena, presents, in the one case as in the other, incontrovertible evidence that a geometer has by this means expressed a geometrical thought.

All natural forms conform more or less closely to geometrical ideals. This is the case alike in planets and crystals, in animals and plants. Nature, therefore, may be looked upon as made up of a series of drawings and models by which the science of mathematics may be taught in the school of life. The inference is irresistible that an intelligent mind has been at work on the grandest and most magnificent scale conceivable. Professor Flint well remarks: "Could mere matter know the abstrusest properties of space and time and number, so as to obey them in the wondrous way it does? Could what has taken so much mathematical knowledge and research to apprehend have originated with what was wholly ignorant of all quantitative relations? Or must not the order of the universe be due to a mind whose thoughts as to these relations are high above even those of the profoundest mathematicians, as are the heavens above the earth? If the universe were created by an intelligence conversant with quantitative truth, it is easy to understand why it should be ruled by definitely quantitative laws; but that there should be

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such laws in a universe which did not originate in intelligence is not only inexplicable but inconceivably improbable. There is not merely in that case no discoverable reason why there should be any numerically definite law in nature, but the probability of there being no law or numerical regularity of any kind is exceedingly great, and of there being no law-governed universe incalculably great. Apart from the supposition of a Supreme Intelligence, the chances in favour of disorder against order, of chaos against cosmos, of the numerically indefinite and inconstant against the definite and constant, must be pronounced all but infinite. The belief in a Divine Reason is alone capable of rendering rational the fact that mathematical truths are realised in the material world." *

Did space permit, we might go through the various branches of natural knowledge, and show that whatever part of the universe we gaze upon, we must everywhere confront order and harmony. Even Mr. Darwin—whose theory of Natural Selection is looked upon by many as a short and easy method for pushing God out of His own universe—is compelled to use language that implies purpose and plan in Nature. "Contrivance" is a term that occurs scores of times in his writings. But assuredly there can be no contrivance without a contriver. This is a fact that the most superficial thinker cannot fail to see. Then, in his volume on "The Fertilisation of Orchids," he says: "The *Labellum* is developed into a long nectary, *in order* to attract *Lepidoptera;* and we shall presently give reasons for suspecting that the nectar is *purposely* so lodged that it can be sucked only slowly,

* Theism, pp. 136-7.

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in order to give time for the curious chemical quality of the viscid matter setting hard and dry." * What is this but plan and purpose on the part of some Designing mind? Of one particular structure he says: "This *contrivance* of the guiding ridges may be compared to the little instrument sometimes used for guiding a thread into the eye of a needle." Assuredly this contrivance implies a contriver. The notion that every organ has a purpose or use he admits to have been most valuable to him in his studies, and to have enabled him to succeed in his discoveries. "The strange position of the *Labellum*," he remarks, "perched on the summit of the column, ought to have shown me that here was the place for experiment. I ought to have scorned the notion that the *Labellum* was thus placed *for no good purpose*. I neglected this plain guide, and for a long time completely failed to understand the flower." † What is all this but an admission, however reluctantly given, that a directing mind lies behind natural phenomena? Let any one try to explain this language upon any other principle. Can we wonder, then, that John Stuart Mill, with all his scepticism, should be compelled to admit that "the adaptations of Nature afford a large balance of probability in favour of creation by intelligence." ‡ Well, a large balance of probability is, at least, something in our favour, if nothing more could be said. In a world where so much uncertainty prevails, "a large balance of probability" should be a tolerably conclusive guide. But we maintain that we have much more than

* Fertilisation of Orchids, p. 29.

† *Ibid.*, p. 262.

‡ Essay on Theism, p. 174.

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"a large balance of probability" on our side. Sir William Thomson—scientifically a far greater man than Mr. Mill, and therefore a much better judge of this question—remarks: "Overpowering proof of intelligence and benevolent design lies around us; and if ever perplexities, whether metaphysical or scientific, turn us away from them for a time, they come back upon us with irresistible force, showing to us through Nature the influence of a free will, and teaching us that all living beings depend upon the ever-acting Creator and Ruler."* This has been my own experience, and it has been that of other men whose minds for a time have been beclouded by doubts, but who by-and-by have found their way into the full sunlight of Christ's truth.

Ten thousand instances could be given, selected from every branch of knowledge, of the purpose and plan that pervades the universe; but my object is not so much to quote large numbers of facts as to reason upon a few that no one ever attempts to dispute. Now, if the existence of a Designing mind be got rid of from the universe, we are driven to the absurdity of supposing that all the order and harmony that exists in Nature is the result of accident, or, as it has been fitly termed, the fortuitous concourse of atoms. I am well aware that Atheistic philosophers object strongly to the word chance. Yet how are we to get rid of it if there be no purpose—no plan? The cause of the present state of things must resolve itself into chance, after all, call it by what name you will. Everything that does not occur by design must be the result of accident. There is no other alternative. Not that it is to be wondered at that the

* Address to the British Association, 1871.

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very ugly and very unphilosophical word chance should be objected to; but then the theory with which it is indissoulbly associated should also be renounced. If the arrangement that we see in the universe be not the result of plan on the part of some mind, it must have come by chance, and in no other way. Things might just as well have settled into some other shape as that in which we now find them. And the chances were greatly in favour of their doing so. The probability must have been so great against the present arrangement as to render it next to impossible. For the order that we see repeats itself continually and regularly, which events resulting from chance never do. On the contrary, when an accident turns up once, the fact itself is a reason for us not to expect it again for a long time. Whenever a particular result occurs frequently, we always conclude that mind must have had something to do with the arrangement. Let twelve dice be thrown up into the air at haphazard, and it is quite possible, but highly improbable, that they should all fall with the six spots uppermost. But suppose the experiment repeated a hundred times, and always with the same result, there is no man outside a lunatic asylum who would not at once conclude that the dice were loaded. The case is precisely similar to that we see in Nature, only that the latter is a thousand times the stronger of the two. Kepler relates that one day, when he had long been meditating upon atoms and the laws by which they were governed, he was called to dinner. There was a salad on the table, and he said to his wife, who had prepared it, "Dost thou think that if from the creation plates of tin, leaves of lettuce, grains of salt, drops of oil and

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vinegar, and fragments of hard-boiled eggs, were floating in space, in all directions and without order, chance could assemble them to-day to form a salad?" His spouse replied, perhaps without seeing the joke, but yet very much to the purpose, "Certainly not so good a one, nor so well seasoned as this."* Now take the case of the motions of the heavenly bodies; and it is but one instance of thousands that might be given. The late Professor de Morgan demonstrated that, when only eleven planets were known, the odds against chance—to which in such a case intelligence is the only alternative—being the cause of all these bodies moving in one direction round the sun, with an inconsiderable inclination of the planes of their orbits, were twenty thousand millions to one. "What prospect," are his own words, "would there have been of such a concurrence of circumstances if a state of chance had been the only antecedent? With regard to the sameness of the directions, either of which might have been from west to east, or from east to west, the case is precisely similar to the following: There is a lottery containing black and white balls, from each drawing of which it is as likely a black ball shall arise as a white one: what is the chance of drawing eleven balls all white?—answer, 2,047 to 1 against it. With regard to the other question, our position is this: There is a lottery containing an infinite number of counters, marked with all possible different angles less than a right angle, in such a manner that any angle is as likely to be drawn as another, so that in ten drawings the sum of the angles drawn may be anything under ten right angles: now, what is the chance of ten drawings

* Claude Bertrand, *Les Fondateurs de l'Astronomie Moderne*, p. 154.

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giving collectively less than one right angle?—answer, 10,000,000 to 1 against it. Now, what is the chance of both these events coming together?—answer, more than 20,000,000,000 to 1 against it. It is consequently of the same degree of probability that there has been something at work which is not chance in the formation of the solar system."* That such results can have been brought about by chance is beyond belief. Such a notion always calls up in my mind the Parody on Lucretius by James and Horace Smith in "Rejected Addresses," in which the authors hazard the supposition that Drury Lane Theatre had been erected by accident, as the Latin poet supposed the worlds to have been formed:—

> "I sing how casual bricks in airy climb
> Encountered casual horsehair, casual lime;
> How rafters, borne through wandering clouds elate,
> Kiss'd in their slope blue elemental slate;
> Clasp'd solid beams in chance-directed fury,
> And gave to birth our renovated Drury."†

Now, it is not a whit more absurd to suppose Drury Lane Theatre or St. Paul's Cathedral built by the accidental accumulation of the materials, than to imagine that worlds could have been formed, and then inhabitants brought into being, without a designing hand.

> "Has matter more than motion? Has it thought,
> Judgment, and genius? Is it deeply learned
> In mathematics? Has it made such Laws,
> Which but to guess, a Newton made immortal?
> If so, how each sage atom laughs at me
> Who thinks a clod inferior to a man!

* Essay on Probability.

† *Vide* Appendix; Note D.

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If art to form; and counsel to conduct;
And that with greater far than human skill,
Resides not in each block; a Godhead reigns.
Grant then, Invisible, Eternal Mind;
That granted, All is solved."*

5. The universal idea of God cannot be accounted for upon Atheistic principles. It is one of the favourite postulates of Atheism that we can form no idea of God. This, however, is very far from being correct, and shows that Atheists use the word 'idea' as loosely as they do many other words. By an idea they mean that which depicts in the mind some external thing cognised by the senses. But this is far too limited a view to take. Locke says, "Whatever the mind perceives in itself, or is the immediate object of perception, thought, or understanding, that I call an idea." And Cousin beautifully remarks, "We do not perceive God, but we conceive Him, upon the faith of this admirable world exposed to view, and upon the other world more admirable still which we bear in ourselves." We have ideas far higher than those springing from the evidence of sense. Indeed, the lowest of all modes of viewing the universe is that which can discover no reality higher than that which the senses made known. The man who cannot rise above sense-knowledge into more lofty spheres of thought, may be truly described as ἄνθρωπος ψυχικός, a natural man, and living far below his high capabilities. As Wordsworth says,—

"Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a slave, the meanest we can meet."

* Dr. Young.

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And it will be remembered that when this same poet would describe a man in whose breast no generous feelings glowed, and no lofty aspirations impelled to noble thoughts, he said of him—

> "A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

When we speak of the universe itself, the very term that we employ means much more than the senses can make known to us. For what does the word mean? The Atheist says that by it he intends to convey an idea of the entire system of physical nature. Even that is an idea which transcends sense-knowledge, since he has never cognised the entire system of physical nature, and never can. But the word implies more than this. It indicates that in this system there is a oneness or unity, that all its parts are bent to some grand end, and that they form portions of a wondrous whole.

Psychological analysis clearly proves that in the phenomena of consciousness there are elements or principles which in their normal or legitimate development transcend the limits of that very consciousness, and reach to a kind of knowledge of absolute being. No one can analyse his thoughts without seeing at once that he is in possession of ideas, notions, beliefs, etc., which have never been derived from sensation, and which cannot be extracted from sensuous experience. These ideas are space, duration, cause, substance, unity, infinity. And there is a very striking peculiarity about these having a most important bearing on this question—which is, they are distinguished from all the phenomena of sensation, inasmuch as the former are

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necessary, universal, and absolute, while all the latter are contingent, limited, and relative. Take, by way of illustration, the idea of any kind of object—say a house on the one hand, and space on the other. The former of these is derived from experience, and is consequently contingent; the latter we know from reason alone, and is necessary. You can easily conceive of the house being destroyed—being absent from the place that it occupies, and from every other place. And the rule that applies to the house will hold good of all material things. Each one, individually, you can with the greatest ease imagine not to exist. Thus the ideas that we have of material things are relative or contingent. But you cannot by any effort of the mind suppose space to be destroyed. It is not in the power of thought to conceive the non-existence of space. The idea of space is consequently a necessary idea. Take, again, the ideas that attach themselves to event and cause. The idea of an event is a contingent idea; it is something which might or might not happen. Neither supposition is contradictory or impossible. The idea of cause, on the other hand, is necessary. An event being given, the necessity for a cause to produce it follows as a matter of course. An uncaused event is a contradiction in terms. And this law must apply to all times and to all worlds where thinking beings exist. Thus it will be seen we have principles and ideas, not a few, which transcend sense-knowledge, and are necessary and universal.

Now, amongst all peoples and in all ages there is found some sort of belief in God, and hence the existence of some kind of a religion. If the argument *e consensu gentium* does not prove the existence of God, it certainly

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does prove that in all ages some sort of evidence has led men to believe in one. "Religion," says Professor Max Müller, the greatest living authority on the question, "is not a new invention. It is, if not as old as the world, at least as old as the world we know. As soon as we know anything of the thoughts and feelings of man, we find him in possession of religion, or rather possessed by religion. The oldest literary documents are almost everywhere religious. 'Our earth,' as Herder says, 'owes the seeds of all higher culture to religious tradition, whether literary or oral.' Even if we go beyond the age of literature—if we explore the deepest levels of human thought, we can discover in the crude ore, which was made to supply the coins or counters of the human mind, the presence of religious ingredients." * Now, this fact has to be accounted for, and no Atheistic system with which I am acquainted has any sort of explanation that it can furnish worth a straw.

Religion is a necessity of man's nature, and hence its universality. What we may call, following the German, "God-consciousness" exists in all probability more or less in every human breast. Sometimes this faculty has become dimmed by ignorance, superstition, and sin; and occasionally it has been left to rust through disuse, until it has all but disappeared; yet it is never entirely lost. We find some manifestation of it amongst all peoples and in every age. The fact of the universality of the belief in God was noticed by the ancients. Plutarch † asserts positively that there were no races without such a belief; and Artemidorus gives expression to the same idea, the

* Contemp. Rev., May, 1872, p. 211.

† Plut. Adv. Colot. Epicureum, 1124.

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words of the latter being very explicit, Οὐδὲν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων ἄθεον.* In modern times some few persons have called in question the truth of this assertion, but the facts they have relied upon in support of their views have very little weight. It is contended that a few savage tribes in Africa, the Esquimaux, and the aborigines of Australia, have no conception of God, and no sort of religion. But if this were really so, it would simply prove that the Atheist's highest ideal of man is a savage, since all civilised races have the religious faculty. Suppose the case were reversed, and we found savages with a religion, and all civilised peoples without one, how the Atheist would triumphantly point to the fact as a proof that religion was the offspring of ignorance, and always disappeared before science, knowledge, and culture. Such an argument, therefore, as he can found upon the absence of the belief in God amongst savages is not worth much. But the statement that any peoples are entirely destitute of religious ideas is more than questionable. A thorough acquaintance with their language and their modes of thought would in all probability disclose some vestiges of a religion not entirely lost, and a rudimentary faith which, despite its inchoate appearance, is yet capable of very high development. Indeed, there are many indications amongst the lowest savages of a vague belief in the supernatural, even where it does not manifest itself in any external form of worship, nor involve any definite conception of a Supreme Being, or of a life after death. Among these may be named the fear of the dead, which is very common amongst savages. The aborigines of Australia are, perhaps, the lowest race to be found on the face of

* Artemid., i. 9.

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the earth, and they are by no means destitute of the religious idea. The Rev. William Ridley, who has lived a great deal amongst these people, and has carefully studied their habits and modes of thought, remarks, in a letter to Sir John Lubbock, "The Kamilaroi and Wiradhuri tribes, who formerly occupied a large territory on the Darling and its tributaries, have a traditional faith in 'Baiame,' or 'Baiamai,'—literally 'the maker,' from *baia*, to make or build. They say that Baiame made everything. . . . The Rev. J. Gunther, of Mudgee, who was many years engaged in the instruction of the Wiradhuri tribes, has recorded the fact that these people ascribe to Baiame 'three of the attributes of the God of the Bible' —supreme power, immortality, and goodness. . . . A squatter, M. de Becker, who lived many years at a remote station, where the blacks were in frequent communication with him, told me he had seen many of them die with a cheerful anticipation of being soon in a 'better country.'"* God has, in truth, so implanted the idea of Himself in man's soul, that it cannot fail to be discovered there by all who look within, and no circumstances are likely ever thoroughly to erase it. "He who reflects upon himself," says Plotinus, "reflects upon his own original, and finds the clearest impression of some eternal nature and perfect being stamped upon his own soul." Religion preceded governments, and has a deeper root in society than any social law. It led the vanguard of civilisation, and founded the mightiest empires that the world has seen.

The fact that man everywhere has some sort of idea of God, has been considered a complete proof of the existence of such a Being by many of the greatest men that

* Nature, x. 522.

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have ever lived—such men as Anselm, Spinoza, Descartes, Leibnitz, etc. Their argument took the following form: "We have the idea of a perfect Being in our minds. But existence is a part of this idea, and a necessary part; for an imaginary being is less perfect than a real being. Therefore, we are so made as necessarily to believe in the existence of a perfect Being. Whenever we think of God, we are obliged to think of Him as existing. And we can have no higher proof of any reality, than that we necessarily believe in its existence so soon as the idea of it arises in our mind." Whether this argument be conclusive or not, that which springs from it most certainly is—viz., that religious worship, in some form or other, has been engaged in in every age and in every land. If this practice be based upon an illusion, how can we know that anything is true? For what is there that is more universal? If all religions are false, then universal humanity is in error. And that being so, we can have no possible guarantee for truth upon any subject. Our most potent instincts may be delusions, and our most cherished ideas hallucinations. But even then we require to be told how this tremendous delusion called religion arose. What were the causes that gave it birth? what the circumstances that called it into being? This is what the Atheist must explain if he wishes to recommend his philosophy. But he has no explanation to give, and none is possible upon his theory. The only solution of the problem will be found in the fact that "God-consciousness" is deeply implanted in the soul; and the aspiration after the Infinite, the All-Perfect, the Absolute One, is a characteristic of universal humanity. Professor Tyndall has well said, "No Atheistical reasoning can

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dislodge religion from the heart of man. Logic cannot deprive us of life, and religion is life to the religious. As an experience of consciousness, it is perfectly beyond the assaults of logic."* This is so; and hence Atheism can never take firm hold of the mind of man. Man is a religious being, and can no more change his nature in this respect than his physical form. Atheism is foreign to human nature, and can never, under any circumstances, become general. The human soul finds its resting-place only in God, and nothing else can satisfy its deepest wants.

What is it that Atheism has to offer us in exchange for the holy faith of which she seeks to rob us? Simply nothing, and worse than nothing. She points us, not to the golden Orient, bathed in beauty and robed in morning light—a symbol of universal Love and eternal Mercy,—but to a black and dismal abyss, from which issue hollow moans, cries of despair, and "the Everlasting No." She calls upon us to look, not up to a sky clear and tender as the eye of God, "but vaguely all around into a copper firmament pregnant with earthquake and tornado." She bids us exchange our faith in a Providence which feeds the ravens, marks the humble sparrow's fall, and bestows upon man infinite pity and a watchful care that never sleeps, for belief in a Fate cruel as the Furies and unrelenting as Satan. In our distress and our sorrow, when we struggle with sin, and pant after power to conquer and sympathy to cheer, she holds up before our tearful eyes, not the Cross—a source of comfort to millions of our race,—but a cruel skeleton, called Natural Law, with hollow eye-sockets, rattling teeth, and mouldy bones.

* Preface to seventh edition of Belfast Address.

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Listen to what Strauss has to say of the Atheism in which the unbelief of his early years culminated in old age: "The loss of the belief in Providence belongs, indeed, to the most sensible deprivations which are connected with a renunciation of Christianity. In the enormous machine of the universe, amid the incessant whirl and hiss of its jagged iron wheels, amid the deafening crash of its ponderous stamps and hammers, in the midst of this whole terrific commotion, man—a helpless and defenceless creature—finds himself placed, not secure for a moment that on some imprudent motion a wheel may not seize him and rend him, a hammer crush him to powder. This sense of abandonment is at first something awful."* This is Atheism as described by an Atheist. And a gloomy creed it is—enough to blast all hope and cause deep despair to settle on universal humanity. For this wretched, miserable mockery of life, shall we exchange the sweet joy and happiness of religion, that can cheer amid direst distress, and console under heaviest afflictions? That would, indeed, be a madman's act. Spoke not David truly when he described the man who denies God as foolish? The Atheist can see nothing in the universe but huge wheels, ponderous hammers, and heavy beams of iron, governed by an irresistible destiny, which at any moment may grind him to powder, and can in no case afford him either help or sympathy. To the Christian, all external things are seen to be full of beauty and redolent of life. The carolling of the birds, the whisperings of the trees, and the balmy breezes, all tell of a wondrous Love by which earthly things were created and are upheld. Every opening bud, every blooming flower,

* The Old Faith and the New, p. 435.

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the busy insect on the wing, and the mellowed golden beauty of the landscape under the rays of the setting sun, all point to the Everlasting Father and the better country. The blue mountains, with their crests of snow and the calm azure of heaven's arch overhead, proclaim that man is loved by God and cared for by the infinite One. The following fable from Thomas Carlyle aptly describes the Atheist's position: "'Gentlemen,' said a conjuror, one fine starry evening, 'those heavens are a *deceptio visûs:* what you call stars are nothing but fiery motes in the air. Wait a little. I will clear them off, and show you how the matter is.' Whereupon the artist produced a long syringe of great force, and, stooping over a neighbouring puddle, filled it with mud and dirty water, which he then squirted with might and main against the zenith. The wiser of the company unfurled their umbrellas; but most part, looking up in triumph, cried, 'Down with delusion! It is an age of science! Have we not tallow lights, then?' Here the mud and dirty water fell, and bespattered and besplattered these simple persons, and even put out the eyes of several, so that they never saw the stars any more. Enlightened Utilitarian! art thou aware that this patent logic-mill of thine, which grindeth with such a clatter, is but a mill?" This mechanical view of things can neither satisfy the demands of the intellect, nor meet the wants of the heart. Man's earliest guides and first leaders looked to the heavens for support, and acquired fresh strength for their purpose by so doing. The simple breathings of infancy point to fears of that which lies beyond material things, and the stoutest-hearted man—whatever his boastings to the contrary—is in continual awe of the supernatural. The fears and hopes and desires of humanity

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all point to a spiritual source, whilst the deepest yearnings of the human heart tell of wants that can never be satisfied without trust in God.

There is a grand poem, translated from the Russian by the late Sir John Bowring, which, despite its length, is so good and so appropriate as to be worth reproducing here :—

Oh, Thou Eternal One ! whose presence bright
All space doth occupy, all motion guide,
Unchanged, through Time's all-devastating flight ;
Thou only God ! there is no God beside !
Being above all beings ! mighty One !
Whom none can comprehend, and none explore ;
Who fill'st existence with Thyself alone ;
Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er ;
Being whom we call God, and know no more.
In its sublime research, Philosophy
May measure out the ocean deep, may count
The sands, or the sun's rays ; but God ! for Thee
There is no weight nor measure ; none can mount
Up to Thy mysteries ; Reason's brightest spark,
Though kindled by Thy light, in vain would try
To trace Thy counsels infinite and dark.
And thought is lost, ere thought can soar so high,
Even like past moments in eternity.
Thou, from primeval nothingness didst call
First chaos, then existence ; Lord, on Thee
Eternity had its foundation ; all
Sprung forth from Thee,—of light, joy, harmony,
Sole origin ; all life, all beauty Thine.
Thy word created all, and doth create ;
Thy splendour fills all space with rays divine ;
Thou art, and wert, and shall be ! Glorious, great,
Light-giving, life-sustaining Potentate,
Thy chains the unmeasured universe surround,—
Upheld by Thee, by Thee inspired with breath !

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Thou the beginning with the end hast bound,
And beautifully mingled life and death!
As sparks mount upwards from the fiery blaze,
So some are born, so worlds spring forth from Thee;
And as the spangles in the sunny rays
Shine round the silver snow, the pageantry
Of heaven's bright army glitters in Thy praise.*
A million torches, lighted by Thy hand,
Wander unwearied through the blue abyss:
They own Thy power, accomplish Thy command,
All gay with life, all eloquent with bliss.
What shall we call them? Piles of crystal light,
A glorious company of golden streams,
Lamps of celestial ether burning bright,
Suns lighting systems with their joyous beams.
But Thou to these art as the noon to night;—
Yes, as a drop of water in the sea,
All this magnificence in Thee is lost.
What are ten thousand worlds compared to Thee?
And what am I, then? Heaven's unnumbered host,
Though multiplied by myriads, and arrayed
In all the glory of sublimest thought,
Is but an atom in the balance weighed
Against Thy greatness; is a cypher brought
Against Infinity. What am I, then? Nought.
Nought but the influence of Thy light divine,
Pervading worlds, hath reached my bosom too.
Yes, in my spirit doth Thy spirit shine,
As shines the sunbeam in a drop of dew.
Nought! But I live, and on Hope's pinions fly
Eager towards Thy presence; for in Thee
I live, and breathe, and dwell, aspiring high,
Even to the throne of Thy divinity.

* The force of this simile can hardly be imagined by those who have never witnessed the sun shining with unclouded splendour in a cold of twenty or thirty degrees of Réaumur, and thousand and ten thousand sparkling stars of ice brighter than the brightest diamond play on the surface of the frozen snow, and the slightest breeze sets myriads of icy atoms in motion whose glancing light and beautiful rainbow hues dazzle and weary the eye.

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I am, O God; and surely Thou must be!
Thou art; directing, guiding all Thou art:
Direct my understanding, then, to Thee;
Control my spirit, guide my wandering heart;
Though but an atom 'midst immensity,
Still I am something fashioned by Thy hand;
I hold a middle rank 'twixt heaven and earth,
On the last verge of mortal being stand,
Close to the realm where angels have their birth,
Just on the borders of the spirit-land.
The chain of being is complete in me;
In me is matter's last gradation lost,
And the next step is Spirit, Deity!
I can command the lightning, and am dust;
A monarch, and a slave; a worm, a god!
Whence came I here, and how? so marvellously
Constructed and conceived? This clod
Lives surely through some higher energy,
For from itself alone it could not be!
Creator,—yes, Thy wisdom and Thy word
Created me! Thou Source of life and good!
Thou Spirit of my spirit, and my Lord!
Thy light, Thy love, in their bright plenitude,
Filled me with an immortal soul to spring
Over the abyss of death, and bade it wear
The garment of eternal day, and wing
Its heavenly flight beyond this little sphere,
Even to its Source, to Thee, its Author, there
O thought ineffable! O vision blest!
Though worthless our conceptions all of Thee,
Yet shall Thy shadowed image fill our breast,
And waft its homage to Thy Deity.
God! thus alone my lowly thought can soar,—
Thus seek Thy presence. Being wise and good!
'Midst Thy vast works, admire, obey, adore;
And when the tongue is eloquent no more,
The soul shall speak in tears of gratitude.

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Agnosticism—The Unknown God.

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"Αρχαῖος μὲν οὖν τις λόγος καὶ πάτριός ἐστι πᾶσιν ανθρώποις, ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ τὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ θεοῦ ἡμῖν συνέστηκεν."*—ARISTOTLE.

"Material Reason ne'er could scan
The real world, the world of man.
The spirit borne to Heaven by prayers,
And wafted by Love's fragrant airs,
Alone reveals Life's actual scheme,
Alone disperses Fancy's dream,
Alone partakes of food divine,
And tastes in Heaven of angel-wine:
And only through the love that flows
From love to God, to human kind,
The soul the open secret knows;
Thought self-ingermed, is empty wind.
The cold Logician sees a hearse,
And draws from it the universe.
The barren Pedant feeds on sand,
He eats the refuse of the Past.
The dry bones crumble in his hand,
He crumbles like them at the last."

T. L. HARRIS.

* There is a saying of old date, and handed down from their ancestors to all men, that all things come from God, and through God to us.

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II.

AGNOSTICISM—THE UNKNOWN GOD.

PAUL, although a Jew, was learned to a certain extent in the philosophy of the Greeks. He was familiar with the modes of thought that prevailed amongst those highly cultured people, and was therefore enabled to speak to them as none of the other apostles could have done. No man was ever better qualified to become a missionary, and to carry the truth to men who had not only never heard of it before, but who held strong opinions of their own, antagonistic to the new doctrine. The Jew he could confute from Moses and the prophets, and the Greek he could debate with, taking his stand on the statements made by poets and philosophers. With the former he "disputed in the synagogue" on the things contained in their own Scriptures; and the latter he confronted in the "market-place" with arguments which they could best understand. Driven by persecution from city to city, this great apostle reached Athens, intending to wait there until joined by Silas and Timothy. Amidst the monuments and statues and other works of art of unparalleled beauty, he rambled, his soul saddened and charmed by what he saw. Here, in point of learning and culture, was the foremost city in the world—the city whose artistic productions shame the civilisation of to-day; and here, too, was the grossest idolatry. Temples were

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there of surpassing magnificence; statues of unrivalled beauty in every courtyard; famous busts at the corner of every street; the whole the wonder of the world and the admiration of the ages. But, alas! the statues were those of profligate men, deified, and the temples were devoted to the worship of idols. Not only was the true God not known, but idolatry was often coupled with debasing rites and licentious ceremonies. Morally, as well as spiritually, the people were sunk in degradation. Let those who tell us that moral regeneration can be brought about by learning, refinement, and culture, ponder well on the state of ancient Greece and Rome. In æsthetics, there was at Athens everything that was calculated to charm the soul of a highly educated man like Paul; but when he looked at the moral and religious condition of the people, he must have been saddened beyond measure, and his heart must have been ready to sink within him.

When he saw that the city was "wholly given to idolatry," *i.e.*, literally covered with idols—κατείδωλον referring to the place, not to the people,—his spirit was roused; he could no longer keep silence and refrain from proclaiming the message he had come to deliver. Further delay on his part he would have considered criminal, and he therefore at once proceeded, not simply to dispute "in the synagogue with the Jews," and in the market-place with those whom he met there,—philosophers and their pupils,—but to tell the grand story—the story that never grows old, but is as fresh to-day and as potent for good now as it was eighteen hundred years ago,—of Jesus and the resurrection. This truth was then, and is still, the foundation of the Christian religion; and consequently Paul lost no time in making it known. Then

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it chanced that some of the members of the two great philosophic sects, the Epicureans and Stoics, encountered him. Part of these called him a babbler (σπερμολόγος), literally a picker-up of small seeds, like a bird, *i.e.*, a collector and retailer of insignificant scraps of information; and others charged him with setting forth strange gods, foreign divinities. They supposed that Jesus and the resurrection were two demons—the word demon not being used of a bad spirit, as the Jews employed it, but of any kind of spiritual existence as it was understood by the Greeks. The doctrine of the resurrection from the dead would not only startle them by its novelty, but provoke their ridicule and contempt by its absurdity. Paul was now brought to the Areopagus, an eminence on the west side of the Acropolis. Mars' Hill was so called in consequence of Ares, or Mars, having been brought to trial there, before the assembled gods, for the murder of Halirrhothius, the son of Poseidon. It is described as "a narrow, naked ridge of limestone rock, rising gradually from the northern end, and terminating abruptly on the south." It rose at its highest end to about sixty feet above the level of the sea. Very near it was the Agora, where the apostle commenced his discussion with the Athenians; and the steps by which he ascended may be still seen cut in the rock. On the summit was the spot where the judges of the upper council sat and administered justice. Their seat was a stone bench cut in the rock, which still remains. "On this hill," says Howson, "had sat the most awful court of judicature from time immemorial, to pass sentence on the greatest criminals, and to decide on the most solemn questions connected with religion." From this fact some of the German critics,

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and other Rationalists, have thought that Paul was put upon his trial; but the whole tenor of the narrative contained in the seventeenth chapter of the Acts forbids such a supposition. His listeners do not appear to have been actuated by a spirit of persecution, nor indeed by an unfriendly feeling. They were curious to hear what he had to say, and no doubt their curiosity was mingled with a considerable amount of contempt. Still they seem to have been desirous of hearing a more methodical discourse upon that of which they had only as yet picked up some disjointed and inexplicable fragments in the *Agora*, or place of public resort. "May we know, therefore," they said to him, with a certain degree of politeness and a good deal of irony, "what this new doctrine is whereof thou speakest." This request furnished Paul with an opportunity for preaching the grand sermon which I have made the basis of the present paper. The difficulties under which Paul laboured on this occasion must have been very great. In the first place, he was a foreigner, and for such the Athenians, and indeed all other Greeks, had the greatest possible contempt. They were themselves highly civilised, and they knew it, and prided themselves upon it, and looked upon the people of all other nations as barbarians. Paul himself refers to this in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says, "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians,"* thus separating the Greeks in their civilisation and culture from the rest of the world. Any teaching of a foreigner would be likely to be sneered at and treated with supreme contempt. It would not for one moment be deemed possible that a Jew could have anything to say worth the listening to,

* Rom. i. 14.

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or any truth to propound deserving of consideration. In the next place, the apostle's knowledge of the Greek language was very imperfect. How could he, therefore, compete with the mighty orators for which that nation had become so famous, and whose mastery of its wonderful language was so marvellously calculated to charm those who heard their unparalleled orations? His rude speech must have sounded terribly harsh to ears that had been attuned to listen to the grandest eloquence that human speech had ever produced. Not only would they look upon the composition of his discourse as a miserable and barbarous jargon, but his oratorical powers, which he himself calls "contemptible" (*vide* 2 Cor. x. 10), must have called forth amongst them ridicule or contempt—perchance both. But the greatest drawback of all to his preaching would be the message which he had to deliver. Nothing could possibly be more ridiculous to the cultured mind of the Greek than the story of the resurrection to life of a dead man, especially of a man who had been crucified. The disadvantages, therefore, under which Paul laboured were very great indeed, and it seems to us wonderful that he got a hearing at all. Yet he was listened to with attention; and hence the wonderful sermon—the greatest on record, save one—which we have here before us.

He took his stand on the Areopagus, and said, "Ye men of Athens," Ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι,—that is, men in the higher sense of the term, not simply human beings, but persons worthy the name of men. This was the mode in which all the Greek orators commenced their orations; Demosthenes, for example, always begins in this way. Thus Paul employs the greatest courtesy towards those he is

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preaching to, employing the very terms in which they were accustomed to hear themselves addressed—terms which recognised them as citizens of the greatest intellectual capital of the world. "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." The term here employed, δεισιδαιμονεστέρους, does not mean superstitious in the sense in which we are accustomed to understand the word, but rather devout, or in fear of the gods,—not in a degrading, but in a good sense, as religiousness. Alford renders this "carry your religious reverence very far;" and adds that "Blame is neither expressed nor even implied; but their exceeding veneration for religion laid hold of as a fact on which Paul with exquisite skill engrafts his proof that he is introducing no new gods, but enlightening them with regard to an object of worship on which they were confessedly in the dark."* "For," adds the apostle, "as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ, To the unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." The word "ignorantly" is somewhat too harsh a rendering of the original; it should be, "Whom ye worship, not knowing Him,"—*i.e.*, the Being whom you worship, but whilst doing so admit that you know nothing of Him,—that very God I come to declare or set forth unto you;" or, as several versions have it, "*What* therefore ye worship, . . . *that* set I forth."

It is a striking peculiarity of the Bible, that it is applicable to all ages. Could we ever outgrow it, then it would become useless. But that is not possible. Its teachings are for all times. There is an unknown God to-day as certainly as there was in Paul's time; and it

* Greek Test., II., p. 195.

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is the business of the Christian teacher to declare Him, or set Him forth.

In one sense God must always be unknown: the mind of man is finite, and cannot therefore comprehend the Infinite. This is why creation appears full of such awful mysteries, the contemplation of which often, not only confounds the intellect, but paralyses the imagination. An insect cannot understand a man; a child does not comprehend the motives which govern the actions of its parents; the ignorant peasant is totally unable to fathom the mighty thoughts which the gigantic intellects of a Newton, a Kant, or a Shakspeare flung upon the world. How much less, therefore, can we know to perfection God, between whom and ourselves the distance must always be infinite!

It is not very clear how it was that the altar mentioned by Paul came to be erected at Athens. By some it is supposed that Polytheism had made so many gods by the deification of every human passion, that no more could be thought of; and hence, to cover the whole ground, an additional altar was erected to an unknown god, at the shrine of which the worship should ascend to any possible deity that might have been overlooked. Others think that some special benefits had been received by the people, which could not be traced to any of the known gods, hence an altar to the unknown. In proof of this latter view, it has been stated that the Athenians, being visited by a pestilence, invited Epimenides to lustrate or purify their city, and that he resorted to the following method. He took several sheep to the Areopagus, and left them there to wander about as they pleased under the observation of persons appointed to attend them. When each of these, one by one, was noticed to lie down,

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it was immediately sacrificed on the spot, in order to propitiate God. By this means, it is said, the city was relieved of the pestilence. But then it was of course unknown what particular deity had been propitious, so an altar was erected on every spot where a sheep had been sacrificed "to an unknown God." A much more probable explanation of the origin of the altar is that it was erected in consequence of some dim conception in the minds of the people, of a Supreme Being higher than all the gods of mythology, who, while He satisfied a yearning want of the heart, took no hold on the intellect. This would seem to be apparent from Paul's words, that he would declare the very God thus worshipped. In any case, we know that there was an altar of this description, for Lucian refers to it, and its existence was a tacit but terrible confession of the failure of heathendom to meet the spiritual wants of humanity.

Nowhere, perhaps, had the intellect risen so high as at Athens. This city was supreme in the world of mind. Here intellectual wisdom reigned as it has reigned in no other place either in ancient or modern times. Men had listened here with admiration and almost awe to the wondrous words of wisdom spoken by Socrates, and here the profound thoughts of him who has been aptly called the "divine Plato" had permeated the human mind. Here it was that the tragedies of Æschylus and the comedies of Sophocles had fascinated and charmed; and here, too, the impassioned eloquence of Demosthenes, and the lofty oratory of Pericles, had stirred men's souls to their very depths. Whatever the intellect could do had been done for this famous city of the ancient time. The eye had been dazzled by the finest works of art that

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had ever been gazed upon. Imagination had revelled in unsurpassed flights of fancy, giving birth to her own special creations, and thus throwing over the rude things of earth a covering of a fairyland of poetry and romance. Philosophy had appealed to reason, and raised the intellect to god-like heights, from which elevated pedestal it could calmly contemplate alike the joys and ills of life. Culture was paramount, and refinement predominant. Erudition was in the ascendant, and civilisation in its varied forms had taken such deep root in the soil that there seemed no likelihood of its ever being again disturbed. But with all this, what had been done for the soul? Alas! nothing. The sad failure of heathenism to meet the wants of the heart was told on that altar to the unknown God. Epicurean and Stoic, Platonist and Cynic, Sophist and Sceptic, alike bowed their heads abashed in the dust, when they came to contemplate Him in whom Paul declares we "live and move and have our being." Philosophy had attempted to climb the spheres, and raise a pedestal up to heaven, and its failure was awful in the grandeur of the tremendous wreck which ensued. Brahmin and Buddhist and Persian Magi had all got nearer to the truth; for cloudy and misty as were the systems they promulgated, erroneous as were their ideas of Deity and His relationship to man, and imperfect as were the faiths they held by and the religions they believed in, none of them had built an altar to the unknown God. Despite all the culture and erudition of Greece, each of her sons was but

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

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This scene is largely repeated to-day. Science rides over the world, crowned with laurel wreaths, in her triumphal car; knowledge is disseminated on all hands through the land; men peer curiously into the vast expanse of the blue ether over our heads, and analyse the minutest fragments of dust beneath our feet; philosophers endeavour to seize with their grappling-irons the mighty mysteries of the universe, and tear them to shreds; and withal we have again an altar to the unknown God. And the unknown God of to-day is even less satisfactory than that to which an altar was erected in ancient Greece. For the latter indicated a deep, heart-felt want which the pagan religion failed utterly to meet; an intense yearning for something which seemed to be out of reach; a lofty aspiration after the Divine, which appeared to lie beyond the sphere of knowledge; whilst the former, professing to be based upon superior wisdom, is proclaimed with a dogmatism which is arrogant and offensive, and sometimes even flippant and scornful. Agnosticism—as this new negation of knowledge is called—walks the earth with its head erect, as though not to know were a thing to be proud of; instead of looking to earth with tearful eyes, and lamenting the darkness in which it is compelled to grope its way, and the impossibility of obtaining light. Mr. Herbert Spencer, the Corypheus of the modern school of philosophy which ignores God, writes so voluminously of the unknowable that one would almost imagine it to be the only thing which he knows all about. Assuredly, of that which is unknown nothing can be said, and that which is unknowable lies beyond the sphere, not only of language, but even of thought. But our philosophers of to-day prate

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most glibly of both the unknown and the unknowable,—make them the subject of learned disquisitions, and topics to be discussed at the length of thousands of pages of their printed books. The prophets of science tell us that religions are "forms of a force" which must not be permitted to "intrude on the region of knowledge."* But if this force lies outside the region of knowledge, how does Professor Tyndall, who thus speaks of it, know anything about it,—how has he discovered the fact even that it is a force at all? That of which you can predicate that it is the form of a force must be known to that extent at all events, and therefore, so far is itself within the region of thought, and entitled to just as much attention as any other branch of knowledge. Of very many of the phenomena of Nature which it is the business of science to deal with, and which lie peculiarly within the province of scientific research, we know no more than that they are forms of a force. But what would be thought of the man who should declare that, this being so, the sciences which deal with these must not be permitted to intrude on the region of knowledge? All the experiments of Professor Tyndall, conducted in his own special department of science, are just so many attempts to deal with forms of a force, and yet the information thus obtained is looked upon as constituting a very positive kind of knowledge. Religious knowledge is equal in certainty and far higher in importance than the knowledge of science. Knowledge, according to Plato, is "that apprehension of things which penetrates beyond their sensible appearances into their essence and cause." Cicero defines philosophy as "the study of wisdom,

* Tyndall's Belfast Address.

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which wisdom is the knowledge of things divine and human, and of the causes which underlie them."* And even Seneca has declared that "thought breaks through the ramparts of heaven; for it is never satisfied with knowing what is merely set before the senses, but demands the scrutiny of things that lie beyond the confines of this world. Nay, we are born to this end."† Indeed, Mr. Herbert Spencer himself has been compelled to admit that "throughout all time the mind must occupy itself, not only with ascertained phenomena and their relations, but also with that unascertained something which phenomena and their relations imply."‡ And this inquiry leads us into a field higher than the domain of science, and in which the knowledge is no less certain than that which is arrived at by experiment and observation in the province of physics. The verities here may be conclusions deduced from some knowledge, but they refer to what lies beyond the sphere of sense. And their authority is just the authority of reason,—to which, in fact, they owe their existence. If this kind of knowledge is not to be trusted, then clearly there is none that is, for it is the highest that we possess. Sense-knowledge is frequently deceptive, and has to be corrected by reason. The conclusions of reason are more certain than the experiences of sense, for, as has been well observed by a modern writer, we say of the latter simply that "such things are," but of the former, "such things must be." What is termed faith occupies a most prominent position in all knowledge—that of science amongst the rest. Hence Herbart remarks, "It is a great mis-

* De Offic., ii. 2. † De Otio Sap., xxxii. 6.

‡ First Principles, p. 16.

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take to consider faith, because it differs from verified knowledge (*Wissen*), to be therefore of no authority. For in social life we repose faith in men, even where knowledge, strictly so called, fails us; and we can neither get on without such faith, nor can we shake ourselves free from it."* This same fact has been pointed out by Murphy,† and illustrated by several cases of a very appropriate nature. And religious faith, as the outcome of reason, stands on the same ground as the faith which plays so conspicuous a part in science, in philosophy, and in everyday life.

Tyndall would relegate religion to the "region of emotion," which he says is "its proper sphere." In this he follows to some extent Matthew Arnold, only the latter includes morality in the term. He defines religion as "morality touched with emotion." But the moral feelings may be touched with emotion—and often are—without becoming translated into the religious sentiment; and emotion is no more the peculiar characteristic of religion than it is the distinguishing mark of science. That there is such a thing as religious emotion no one doubts; but, on the other hand, there are a hundred kinds of emotion which have no more connection with religion than they have with physics or politics. "Emotions," says Dr. Fleming, "like other states of feeling, imply knowledge. Something beautiful or deformed, sublime or ridiculous, is known and contemplated; and in the contemplation springs up an appropriate feeling. Emotions are awakened through the medium of the intellect, and are varied and modified through the con-

* Werke, i. 39.

† *Vide* Scientific Basis of Faith.

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ception we form of the objects to which they refer."* Emotions, as their very name implies, are simply movements, and must spring from some pre-existing conception in our minds. We are at sea in a violent storm, and the emotion of fear is called into play; the wind ceases, the clouds are dispelled, and the sun bursts forth, and we are at once moved with joy. There is no religion necessarily either in the one feeling or the other, for both may be experienced by a man who has no belief even in the existence of God. When, therefore, Professor Tyndall makes emotion the basis of the religious sentiment, he states what is not simply opposed to fact, but in the very nature of the terms absurd. Emotions cannot be the basis of anything, for they are simply variable states of the conceptions, *i.e.*, mental acts, thoughts in motion, whose intensity will depend upon the clearness in the consciousness of that which provoked them. Morality touched by emotion is not religion, but religion may so operate upon morality as to call forth emotion, which is a very different matter.

It must strike one as very singular that, after eighteen centuries of Christian teaching, our leading men should be returning to the spiritual darkness of the Athenians in the days of St. Paul, and be found again proclaiming "the unknown God." Yet such is literally the fact. They frequently boast that they have outgrown Christianity, that they have advanced beyond its teachings, and reached a condition in which they no longer require its assistance. It did good service in the past, they are ready to admit; it was a great blessing to mankind in the ages of ignorance and superstition; but in these enlightened and scientific

* Vocab. of Phil., p. 155.

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times it is no longer needed, and therefore in future it may be altogether dispensed with. Yet, instead of taking us forward into a brighter light than that which has illumined the world for eighteen hundred years, they leave us in total darkness, and we have to grope our way as did those ancient peoples who lived before the rising of the glorious sun of Christian truth. A personal Deity is to be got rid of, and prayer and praise voted obsolete. We are to be cast as poor helpless orphans on the world, having no Divine Father to love us or care for us, and no future save the grave. And again we are to erect our altars to the unknown God. This is clearly not going forwards, but backwards,—two thousand years with one bound. The apostles of science tell us that our knowledge cannot extend outside the phenomena of the material universe, and that whatever lies beyond these we must ever remain in ignorance of; and that as we ought to keep within the limits of the knowable, so we must give up, at once and for ever, all attempts to learn anything of God. Huxley thinks that theology itself is moving in this direction. He says: "The theology of the present has become more scientific than that of the past, because it has not only renounced idols of wood and idols of stone, but begins to see the necessity of breaking in pieces the idols built up of books, and traditions, and fine-spun ecclesiastical cobwebs, and of cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions by worship, 'for the most part of the silent sort,' at the altar of the Unknown and Unknowable." * What kind of worship we are to offer at this shrine he does not inform us, except that it is by cherishing the noblest and

* Lay Sermons, p. 20.

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most human of man's emotions, and is to be of the silent sort. Silence, however, being a negative quality, will not serve as a description to enlighten us much; and which are the most human of emotions, and how they are to be cherished, we are left to find out as best we can. If theology be really moving in the direction of this dark and empty void—which I certainly do not believe it is—then the worse for the theology. Such worship—if indeed it can be called worship at all—serves but to perplex and bewilder, and make "confusion worse confounded." The late Mr. G. H. Lewes says that "the reason of man is incompetent to know God, because reason is finite, and the finite cannot embrace the infinite."* Of course the finite cannot embrace or comprehend the infinite. But assuredly it cannot be meant that we can know nothing of that which we do not fully and thoroughly comprehend. Yet unless this is intended to be the inference drawn, Mr. Lewes' words have no meaning. Do I not know something of a thousand things which I cannot fully comprehend? I read the works of Plato, and I learn something of the man, and the great thoughts which he has left as a legacy to mankind, but I am not able to fathom the profound depths of his mighty mind. Can I know nothing of Shakspeare because I am not in every respect equal to him, so as to comprehend every thought that he has given to the world? Does any scientist comprehend fully all the marvellous mysteries connected with that special department of Nature with which his science deals? You cannot comprehend the best-known of all Nature's laws—that of gravity; surely it does not follow from this fact that you can know nothing of its

* Hist. Phil., 1st ed., p. 198.

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manifestations? "Is the ocean," asks Barrow, "less visible because, standing upon the shore, we cannot discern its utmost bounds?" And Cudworth sagely observes, "We may approach near to a mountain, and touch it with our hands, though we cannot encompass it all round, and enclasp it with our arms."* In the same way, by contemplating the works of God, we learn something, however little, of God Himself. That the finite cannot comprehend the infinite is a truth obvious enough; but that the finite can apprehend those manifestations of the infinite which fall within the sphere of its grasp—and these are numerous—is equally clear. God has revealed something of Himself in His works, and that much we can know of Him at least; and He has been pleased in His Divine wisdom and love to make a clearer revelation of His character in a book which most of these philosophers despise, and what we learn in its pages we can also know. "The power which the universe manifests," says Tyndall, "is utterly inscrutable." In its essence of course it is, but surely not in its manifestations; for what is all science but an attempt to understand and explain these? The Professor himself, in his lectures and published works, claims to be an exponent of the manifestations of this very inscrutable power. But it is replied that it is only the manifestations of the power, and not the power itself, that we know. I reply, it is only the manifestations of any power that we can really know. The Professor is himself inscrutable to me. I only know of his words and his doings—that is, his manifestations; but that is assuredly enough. No man's real inner self can be known to another; all that can be

* Intel. System, vol. iii., p. 221.

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known are his utterances and his acts; but these reveal his character,—at least very much of it, certainly enough to enable us to form an opinion respecting him, and to call forth in us feelings of love, admiration, and esteem, or the reverse, as the case may be. In the same way precisely that I judge of another man—viz., by his works—do I arrive at a conclusion respecting God. We do not and cannot know Him in His Divine essence; but we behold the glory of His power, His wisdom, and His love reflected in His works. To say, therefore, that God is utterly unknowable, is by no means correct.

The apostles of culture, with Matthew Arnold at their head, give us another form of Agnosticism. They do not seem willing to get rid of religion altogether, nor to reduce everything to material forces, and thus leave the universe and man to be influenced by nothing but the unvarying operation of natural law. Their desire appears to be to conserve the religious element in humanity, to retain the Bible,—into whose pages, however, they foist a new meaning,—and to cling to some sort of spiritual worship. God is to be considered simply as "the stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being."* How there can be any stream either of tendency or of anything else where there is no fountain as a source from which it can flow, we are not told; and how things can fulfil any law where there is no purpose and no plan, is equally puzzling. Mr. Arnold denies the personality of God, yet he thinks that the term Father may be very appropriately applied to the "not ourselves that maketh for righteousness,"—whatever that may mean, confessing that the great "Power in us and around us is best described

* Literature and Dogma, p. 41.

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by the name of this authoritative but yet tender and protecting relation."* To call any abstract power, whether it tends to righteousness or unrighteousness, by the loving name of Father, is surely to indulge in singular verbal jugglery, and to use language only calculated to bewilder and perplex. It is useless to appeal to the Old Testament, and to tell us that the Eternal Being therein set forth is so spoken of, because to that we reply that He was there portrayed as a Person, and believed to be one by those who called Him Father, the personality being in their eyes an essential of the Fatherhood. The "Power not ourselves that maketh for righteousness," is assuredly more difficult to conceive of than a "moral Governor of the Universe," the latter phrase being most objectionable in Mr. Arnold's eyes; and the former has the disadvantage of being no more capable of satisfying the wants of the heart, than of meeting the demands of the intellect. If this Power possesses intelligence, it must also have personality, for we cannot conceive of the former without the latter; and if it lacks intelligence, it is simply an abstract force lying within the domain of science, and completely outside the province of religion. Moreover, we should like to be informed as to the source from whence it obtained its tendency to righteousness, for there can be no righteousness apart from a personal mind. Both the tendency, therefore, and the standard by which that to which it is tending is to be measured, imply a personal righteous Being. This is the Being that we call God.

The Agnosticism of the present age is as unsatisfactory as that which was indicated by the inscription on the

* Literature and Dogma, p. 35.

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altar at Athens; and far more censurable, because it comes after so many centuries of Christian light. It is, however, but a fashion of the day, and will pass away as have done a hundred other vagaries; and the coming age will have to seek for it—if it desires to find it—in the limbo where lie buried so many exploded errors, and half or wholly forgotten fallacies.

> "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
> The eternal years of God are hers;
> But error, wounded, writhes in pain,
> And dies amidst her worshippers."

But the unknown God was to be revealed. "Whom," said the great apostle, "therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you," or set forth unto you. This was Paul's work, to reveal or make known the unknown God. From the tenor of his remarks he seems to have recognised the fact that this altar and the various idols by which it was surrounded expressed pretty nearly as much knowledge of God as could be obtained by man from the study of nature without the assistance of the light of Revelation. Here was a visible form in which the restless human imagination had endeavoured to embody the conception of the mystery in which the Divinity was enshrined. Graceful and stately forms were here in marble, representing the various phenomena of Nature —Summer and Winter, Night and Day, Sunshine and Storm. And here stood an altar to the God of Nature, on which was inscribed the confession of the ignorance of the worshippers regarding Him. Paul was surrounded by works of surpassing beauty, indicative of lofty genius and noble endeavour, and he was addressing the most intelligent people on the face of the earth. He brings

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therefore to his task no angry feelings, no sneering disdain, no impatience; but proceeds, in a tender, kind, and loving spirit, to tell his hearers of the great truth which Revelation alone could make known. "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." God's real character he knew could only be learnt from Revelation, and these Greeks had not been blessed by possessing this boon. In nature there are manifestations of infinite wisdom and almighty power. A glory which is awful in its sublimity rests upon the physical universe. The handiwork of God can be traced in shining stars and in rolling waters, in every leaf that moves by the wind, and in every flower that opens to the sun. The song of the bird, the insect's buzz, and the calm silence of the summer evening, all proclaim a great Creator. But the relationship of God to man, His fatherly love and tender care, we can only discover in the revelation which He, in His Divine goodness, has vouchsafed to His fallen children.

"The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord;
In every star Thy wisdom shines;
But when our eyes behold Thy word,
We read them there in fairer lines.
The rolling sun, the changing light,
And nights and days Thy power confess!
But the blest volume Thou hast writ
Reveals Thy justice and Thy grace."

These scriptures Paul had read, and he had himself become a chosen vessel of God to utter by inspiration truths which the unaided intellect of man could not reach. He could therefore declare the unknown God.

Paul knew God as no Greek philosopher did, because there had been opened to him sources of information

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which their studies had never reached. "God," said he, "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God reflected on us from the face of Jesus Christ."* This was the secret which the apostle had learned, and it brought to light more real knowledge of God than all the human studies that had been engaged in since the world began. The phenomena of nature, and the wisdom displayed in the works of the Creator as seen in the physical universe, were not to be despised. Much knowledge could be obtained from these that would prove both instructive and profitable, but not sufficient to satisfy the deep wants of the soul. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,"—that is, arrived at by inference from observation of the things that are made, —"even His eternal power and Godhead."† In his epistle to the Romans Paul claims the testimony of the works of God as bearing witness to God's power; and in his address to the people of Lystra he shows that God's ways demonstrate His goodness. But evidence far higher than could be supplied by either, was to be found in the revelation brought to light by Christ, the true Revealer. "But now," said he in his letter to the Galatians, "after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements?"‡ Their knowledge of God was obtained through Him who only is the way, the truth, and the life. God was to be really known, not by the exercise of the organs of sense, nor even by intuition,

* 2 Cor. iv. 6. † Rom. i. 20. ‡ Gal. iv. 9.

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but by Christ. God "is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto,"—that is, dazzling the spiritual eyes of all beholders, as the natural sun when gazed at blinds the bodily organs of vision,—"whom no man hath seen nor can see."* He is not to be seen by mortal eyes, except in Him who was "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person."† This is the source from which any true knowledge of God is to be obtained, and this was what Paul declared to the Athenians. He was wiser than the wisest of Greek philosophers, and knew more of Deity than the profoundest intellects of that most intellectual age, because he knew Christ. God in His Divine essence is unknown and unknowable, but He has made such a revelation of His character and His attributes as will meet the wants of the greatest minds that the ages have seen, and may be understood by the most ignorant and illiterate. "No man hath seen God at any time," the apostle John tells us. The Greek word (οὐδείς) rendered man has a much wider signification; it means, no one,—that is no being of any kind—not the loftiest created intellect in the universe, not the purest and brightest angel in the heavens—no created being, however high and mighty,—has seen God at any time. Philosophers will, I doubt not, agree with this much. Well, so far they are right. But the most blessed truth is that which follows: "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father,"—*i.e.*, the intimate associate of His eternal Spirit,—"He hath declared Him,"‡ or made Him clear

* 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. † Heb. i. 3. ‡ John i. 18.

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to us. There is the revelation surpassing all science, all philosophy, all worldly wisdom, all erudition, the highest flights of genius and the profoundest of human thoughts. Everything in earth or heaven sinks into insignificance before this. Here, and here alone, God is really and truly known. Do you desire to learn what God is like? I point you to Christ. There is the revelation and the Revealer blended in one. When the disciples asked our Lord, as many a pupil had asked his master before, to describe God, how momentous was the answer that was given! He did not point to the sun, whose golden rays were illuminating and vivifying the earth; nor to the moon, shedding her silvery beams over the face of night; nor to the stars, like sparks of glory set in the dark canopy of the heavens; neither to the luxuriant foliage of the trees; nor to flowers of purple, red, and white, whose fragrance scented the morning air; nor to the sea, with the roaring laughter of its playful and joyous waves; nor to the earth, basking in the Almighty's smile. He referred to none of these, full of God's glory as they all were; but exclaimed in wondrous words of wisdom, worth more than all the poetry, all the art, and all the philosophy of the ages past and the æons to come, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, for I am in the Father and the Father in me."

We have not, therefore, to climb up the dark stairs of the universe, losing ourselves amidst its inextricable mazes, till we become fatigued and worn out by the search; but the plain open road lies before us, and he may find his way who will.

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The Divinity that shapes our ends.

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" Οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων, οὔτ ὄλβιος οὔτε τενιχρός,
Οὔτε κακὸς νόσφιν δαίμονος οὔτ ἀγαθός." *—THEOGNIS.

"Dico providentiâ deorum mundum et omnes mundi partes et initio constitutas esse, et omni tempore administrari." †—CICERO.

" O all-preparing Providence divine!
In Thy large book what secrets are enroll'd?
What sundry helps doth Thy great power assign,
To prop the course which thou intend'st to hold!"

DRAYTON.

* There is no one of men, either rich or poor, either mean or noble, without the aid of the gods.

† I say that the universe and all its parts were originally constituted, and have at all times been governed, by the providence of the gods.

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III.

THE DIVINITY THAT SHAPES OUR ENDS.

ONE of the most momentous facts with which we have to deal, and which confronts us at every turn, is that the universe is one. This, in fact, is what its name implies. Its phenomena are numerous and manifold, but they are all intimately connected with each other, and in their totality they are one. The great question of the relationship of unity to multiplicity occupied the attention of the profoundest thinkers of ancient times, and even to-day it is not answered. The problem appears incapable of solution, yet it cannot be got rid of, but stares us in the face whichever way we look. It has an intimate relationship to man, his connection with and dependence upon his fellows, and his subordinacy to the One who gave him being, and who is his constant support. God is our Father and our Sovereign: "He has made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Even Homer addresses the Divine Being as Father Zeus, Ζεῦ πάτερ,—hence the name Jupiter as applied to the supreme divinity. The Lord is the King, not only of all the earth, but of the universe, and all created beings are His subjects. His

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sovereign will is law for man and angels, for brutes and inorganic things. He is in reality what the Roman emperors with a good deal of audacity styled themselves, *Pater patriæ.* In fact, St. Paul calls Him the Father of "the whole family in heaven and earth." * Philo speaks of the world as "one vast community under one polity and one law." Cicero says, "We are subject to this Divine mind, which we call Almighty God. And we are therefore to regard the universe as constituting one vast commonwealth of gods and men." † And David tells us in the inspired volume that "the Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all." ‡ And in most appropriate language Solomon declares that "man's goings are of the Lord." § In this last-named passage we have in the Hebrew two different words rendered man. The first is גֶּבֶר, *Geh-ver*, meaning a mighty one, or mighty man, whose goings are of the Lord; the second is אָדָם, Adam,—*i.e.*, man in general, of whom the question is asked, How then can he understand his own way? The use of the first word is probably twofold: it serves, primarily, to show that the mightiest men who have appeared upon the earth,—men who have founded empires, overturned dynasties, achieved great victories in war, and consolidated or broken to pieces states,—have all been dependent upon God for their power, their position, and their success. The might and glory of Julius Cæsar, the conquests of Alexander, the military prestige of Napoleon, and the victories of Wellington, were all in the plans of the Almighty. Sir Edward Creasy once wrote a book on the "Fifteen

* Eph. iii. 15.
† De Leg. i. 7.
‡ Psalm ciii. 19.
§ Prov. xx. 24.

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Decisive Battles of the World," which work contains a graphic description of the dozen and three great military contests to which modern civilisation owes so much. There is, however, a disposition on the part of the author, and doubtless of the majority of his readers, to over-estimate the great events upon which the progress of states and peoples depend, and to lose sight of God's government in the matter. Civilisation and improvement take place in obedience to that onward march and arrangement of events planned by Him who is Lord of all, and whose Divine wisdom controls all phenomena, whether manifesting themselves in an eclipse of the sun, the eruption of a volcano, or the terrible contest of two great powers on a battle-field. Depend upon it, the question of whether Marathon be lost or won, whether victory be on the side of Napoleon or Wellington at Waterloo, is not a matter of chance, or of uncertainty, to Him who reigns supreme among the nations of the earth. What Shakspeare calls "millioned accidents" abound on every hand, inserting themselves at every step in human life between man's purpose and his achievement, thus blunting "the sharpest intents;" but to Him who sees the whole thing from the end to the beginning, all is clear and determined. In the second place, the use of the word *Gehver* serves to remind us that, mighty a being as man is in the scale of creation, standing at the head of organic life, blessed with wondrous powers of intellect and of mind, capable of bending the great forces of nature to his will, and moulding the phenomena of the universe to his comfort and convenience,—yet he is, comparatively speaking, very powerless, and, despite all he can do, his goings will be of the Lord. The very

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familiar proverb, "Man proposes, God disposes," finds its echo in all languages, so true is it to universal experience. We scheme and plan, and often fail on the very point of success. For

> "See how Fortune can confound the wise,
> And when they least expect it turn the dice." *

Fortune and Chance, men now call the power which frustrates our purposes, as the ancients termed it Fate. But Fortune and Fate are alike meaningless words. Shakspeare has put the case much better when he says,

> "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will."

It is surprising how little power we have in the world when we come to thoroughly realise our true position. "Let us," says Emerson, "build altars to the beautiful Necessity. If we thought men were free in the sense that, in a single exception, one fantastical will could prevail over the law of things, it were all one as if a child's hand could pull down the sun. If in the least particular, one could derange the order of nature, who would accept the gift of life? Let us build altars to the beautiful Necessity which secures that all is made of one piece; that plaintiff and defendant, friend and enemy, animal and planet, food and eater, are of one kind. In astronomy is vast space, but no foreign system; in geology, vast time, but the same laws as to-day."† The men of science who make the lightnings their plaything, turn water into steam, and utilise it for moving the huge pieces of machinery that the peculiar genius of

* Dryden.

† Conduct of Life, p. 31.

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this age has produced,—cause fluids to run uphill, bore through solid rocks, and in a thousand other fantastic ways bend the mightiest laws of nature to human ends, —are very apt to overrate their power. So are warriors and diplomatists—the one ruling by force, and the other by chicanery—when they establish kingdoms and consolidate empires. Alas, how weak and powerless all of them in reality are! We can send messages by means of electricity to the ends of the earth, thus establishing almost instantaneous communication with our brethren at the antipodes; but we cannot secure one moment's sunshine when the clouds forbid it. We can ransack the interior of the earth, and turn up the fossils of bygone ages, and make them tell us the story of their wonderful history of the long ago; but we cannot foretell our own fate to-morrow. We can predict an eclipse of the sun, with the greatest accuracy, a whole million of years before it occurs; but the book of human destiny has been closed so securely that no mortal power can open it. We can navigate the air, live under the water, paint portraits by sunlight, freeze bodies in red-hot vessels, and perform other curious and whimsical tricks; but we are unable to choose the place of our birth, or to postpone by an hour the appointed time of our death. No one asked us the question whether we desired to be born at all, before we came into being. We find ourselves here, utterly regardless of our choice or will. The time at which we should be born was also a matter with which we had nothing to do in the way of making the selection. We might have preferred to have had our lot cast in an earlier period of the world's history, or we might have desired to come a few thousand years

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hence. It is all the same: here we are by no choice of our own, the whole thing arranged by a power which you may call Fate, or Chance, or Destiny, or God,—suffice it to say, it is higher than man, and plans his birth-place and birth-time independently of his will. So neither could he choose his physical characteristics. The tall man often wishes to be short, and the short one tall; but by taking thought ever so much, not a cubit can he add to, or take away from, his stature. One is dark, and another fair; this man slim-built and wiry, that one stout, with firm muscles, and joints well knit together; these women are beautiful as Venus, and bright as the morning, formed to charm and fascinate; and those ugly, repulsive, and shrivelled like the hags in the Macbeth of the modern stage; in all there was little or no choice of their own. The court favourite, with plain looks, would give all her wealth for the natural charms of some peasant girl, who perhaps prizes her beauty so little that she does not even know that she possesses it; but, alas, it cannot be. Cosmetics and rouge and paint, and Madame Rachel, are all vain shams, futile endeavours to dethrone destiny, and as little likely to succeed as the attempts of those madmen of the early world who thought to build a tower that should reach to heaven.

Our social position, too, is a matter over which we have very little control: the "Divinity that shapes our ends" manages this for us with the rest. We are thrown into society apparently at haphazard: some swim to the top, others sink to the bottom, but the great majority remain as nearly as possible where they were at first placed. And that placing they had no hand in whatever. Why is one man born heir to a great estate, a large rent-roll,

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and a lordly title; and another opens his eyes to take in the first glance of human life in a garret surrounded by rags and want, and the heir to nothing but penury? Who can solve the problem? The former prides himself on his birth and his position, but it came to him unasked for, and unsought. He had as little choice in the matter as he had in the colour of his hair or the shape of his nose. Human will is powerless in these cases, and it is fortunate that it is so, for terrible confusion would arise were it otherwise.

It is not so much, however, of those matters that lie within the domain of the physical side of man's life that I purpose to speak, as of those which seem to be more immediately under the control of his volition. In this sphere he is unquestionably free—for the freedom of the will is a fact which no logic can overturn, and no sophistry set aside—a fact revealed to every man's inner consciousness, and therefore as demonstrably certain to him as his own existence: yet even here the extent to which his life is moulded by a Power higher than himself is marvellous to contemplate. We are each surrounded by a circular wall of adamant, and we dance and sing in our cages—the sphere of our freedom; but ever and anon we dash our heads against the sides of our prison-house, and become punished for our presumption in trying to get beyond. Despite all that we can do, there is round about us a destiny "unshunable as death," and our acts are moulded to purposes of which we never dreamed. Burns, turning up a mouse by his plough, compares the "wee sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie" to man, and moralises thus:

> "But, mousie, thou art no thy lane,
> In proving foresight may be vain:

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The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley,
And leave us nought but grief and pain,
For promised joy."

"A man's heart," says Solomon, "deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." That this is so, all the experience of the ages testifies. Things never turn out as we expect. Lord Beaconsfield is credited with being the author of the saying, "The impossible always happens,"—an extravagant way, no doubt, of stating a great truth, for certain it is that the improbable happens, and that much more frequently than the probable. Who is there that has not experienced this in the events that have occurred in his own life?

"Many a hopeless matter doth God arrange;
What we expected never came to pass;
What we did not expect, God brought to bear;
So have things gone this whole experience through."*

Our misfortunes come from quarters we never thought of, and our successes depend usually upon events that we deemed, if we saw them at all, too insignificant to have in any shape influenced our future. Our choice may be right or wrong, but the result of it we can never foresee. A modern author has truly said, "Human wisdom exhausts itself in devising what a higher Power shows to be vanity. We decide for to-day, and a passing moment scatters our decisions as chaff before the wind. We resolve for to-morrow: to-morrow comes but to root up our resolutions. We scheme for our works to remain monuments of our power and wisdom, and the most minute, the most trivial event is sufficient to overturn all our purposes, and cast down to the dust

* Robert Browning.

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the thoughts and labours of a life." As in the old nursery story the loss of a simple nail in the horse's shoe caused the overthrow of the entire army, and as a minute pebble-stone may throw a huge machine out of gear, so an event of the most trifling character may change the destiny of a life. Illustrations in abundance might be given to demonstrate this, but every man's experience will furnish him with examples. Our most darling projects fail in nine cases out of ten; and when they succeed, the result is never what we had expected, and it is not unfrequently worse for us than failure would have been. Says Thackeray, "When His Majesty Louis XIV. jockeyed his grandson on to the throne of Spain (founding thereby the present revered dynasty of that country), did he expect to peril his own, and to bring all Europe about his royal ears? Could a late king of France, eager for the advantageous establishment of one of his darling sons, and anxious to procure a beautiful Spanish princess, with a crown and kingdom in reversion, for the simple and obedient youth, ever suppose that the welfare of his whole august race and reign would be upset by that smart speculation?" Yet so it was, and so it often is. The late Emperor of the French provoked a quarrel with Germany for the purpose of making his dynasty more secure, and consolidating his empire; but in that very attempt he lost his crown, saw his throne totter and fall, and was himself compelled again to become an exile, and to end his days in a foreign land. And yet more recently still, we see the same Nemesis attending his son. I wish to say no unkind word of this young man, nor in any way to lessen the sympathy shown to the noble lady his mother,

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whose affliction we must all condole. But no one can fail to see that his self-imposed mission to Africa was not to fight for principle, or rectitude, or integrity, or righteousness, but to learn a little of actual warfare, and to obtain a sort of prestige for himself of that character which Frenchmen so much delight to honour, —the whole to be some day made subservient to the re-establishment of his dynasty. But what occurs? Why, in this very act he loses his life, and thus renders Bonapartism in France for the future an impossibility. Oh, what a terrible lesson it teaches us of how fatal it always is to do evil that good may come,—the more especially if the supposed good be after all no real good, but an evil bred in ambition and begotten of selfishness. Pilate sacrificed Christ to procure the favour of Cæsar, and as a reward died in exile, his very loyalty being called in question. Caiaphas advised that the Lord should be condemned lest "the Romans should come and take away" Jewish nationality. The Romans came all the same, "the place and nation" of the Jews was destroyed by the edge of the sword of the very men thus attempted to be conciliated. Nemesis sometimes moves slowly, with a soft step and a noiseless tread; but her approach is very sure, and ofttimes the less she is expected, the more severe the blow she lets fall upon her victims. As Schiller has it—

> "For jealous are the powers of destiny.
> Joy premature, and shouts ere victory,
> Encroach upon their rights and privileges.
> We sow the seed, and they the growth determine."

In our arrogance and our pride we fancy that we can mould the future to our will, and shape, not only our own

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life, but the lives of those about us, to our purpose; when after schemes that have kept us awake at night, plans that have distracted our thoughts by day, projects of unheard-of skill so well framed that nothing could in our imagination frustrate their intention, some unforeseen accident has arisen, and we have discovered to our cost that a higher Power than ourselves was at work against us, and we have seen our aerial castles vanish like smoke before the wind. "The force," says Emerson, "with which we resist these torrents of tendency looks so ridiculously inadequate, that it amounts to little more than a criticism or a protest made by a minority of one, under compulsion of millions. I seemed, in the height of a tempest, to see men overboard struggling in the waves, and driven about here and there. They glanced intelligently at each other, but 'twas little they could do for one another; 'twas much if each could keep afloat alone. Well, they had a right to their eye-beams, and all the rest was Fate." This power in the world which men have called Fate, or Destiny, is a terrible reality, and must not be trifled with. It governs men, rules peoples, sways armies, establishes and overturns kingdoms, and makes the history of the world.

We are the masters of our individual acts: there our freedom ends, and there it begins. The consequences that will flow from these acts we can neither determine nor see. A higher power than ourselves will mould them to His plan, and cause them to work out His design, which may be, and often is, very different from our own. Wordsworth wisely says—

> "But quick the turns of chance and change,
> And knowledge has a narrow range;

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Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain."

There is this consolation for us, that very often in the frustration of our pet schemes we benefit in the end, by that which appears to us at the first an overwhelming disaster. Just as God often brings good out of evil, and makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the wickedness of man to prove the means of accomplishing His purposes, so he overrules our own acts for our good in a way that we never dreamed of. Many a man has had cause to thank God for failure where success would have proved his ruin, here and hereafter. This philosophy is hard to learn, but it is not only true, but most useful. There is often a way that seemeth right unto man, whose end is such, that, could he see it, he would be horrified beyond description. God sees it, and removes the danger by blocking up the road. Thus we are greatly the gainers by having a Divinity to shape our ends. Let us ever remember, therefore, with gratitude, that "man's goings are of the Lord."

The "divinity that shapes our ends" has been named Fate, Fortune, Destiny, Circumstance, Law, and so on, but the Scriptures call it the Lord. They ascribe to it not only a personality, but a personality acting upon a defined and foreordained plan. Fate with the Greeks was simply an abstraction expressing the fixedness of all events; but purpose was absent. "Whatever is fated, that will take place," is what the Greek tragedy expresses; but this explains nothing whatever. Necessitarianism, or as it is now called Determinism, falls back upon Law. What occurs must occur because it is the necessary result of the causes which produced it. But this is most unsatis-

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factory as philosophy, and moreover it sweeps away man's freedom, leaving him simply an automaton. The doctrine of circumstances, too, has been made to play a most conspicuous part in reference to this matter. Robert Owen held that man was to the utmost extent the creature of circumstances; that his actions, and indeed his thinkings, were all the result of his organisation, operated upon by his surroundings; and that organisation the consequence of the place of his birth, the character of his parents, prenatal influences, and a score of other purely material facts. Hence those who accepted this doctrine maintained that the regeneration of the race must be brought about by improving the conditions of human life, making man's surroundings more favourable to his development, and thus furnishing him with higher motives to goodness and virtue. But this, in point of fact, would be to change the circumstances, and thus reduce the whole system to a paradox. For if the circumstances made and ruled inexorably the man, leaving him no vestige of freedom, and no power to act but in the way they impelled him to act, how could he possibly change these very almighty circumstances so as to render their influence to others more favourable? The socialist—and the remark applies largely to the secularists of to-day—is on the horns of a dilemma from which it is impossible he can extricate himself. If man be entirely the creature of circumstances, then he is powerless to change these, and hence the scheme proposed for improving the condition of mankind is an impossible one; but if, on the other hand, he has the ability to alter his surroundings, then he is not thoroughly the creature of circumstances, and the system is consequently false in its philosophy.

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> " Nature determines past and end ;
> The germs of greatness are concealed ;
> And stubborn circumstances we bend,
> If strong in will,—if weak, we yield."

The theory of Determinism differs not much from that of Socialism. Both of them are, in fact, but modifications of the old pagan doctrine of Fate. I do not stop here to discuss the question whether man be simply an automaton, with no power to act differently to what he does, as some of the modern luminaries of science would make out. My object is to point out to you that the power by which his destiny is swayed and his goings ordered is not blind fate nor unconscious law, nor unthinking circumstance, but the Lord of heaven and earth. That law and circumstance form part of His almighty plan, and that they thus become secondary causes in His Divine scheme, no one doubts ; but law is only God's mode of working, and circumstance the result of his foreordained purpose, while the one supreme disposer of events is God. This is the doctrine of the Bible, and it is as rational as it is scriptural. The future is not a blank sheet of paper, left for man to scrawl over with such characters as may please his fancy, or serve his selfish ends ; neither is it a book filled with meaningless hieroglyphics, lacking purpose and plan ; it is a marvellous chart, mapped out by an unerring hand, and designed by infinite wisdom. But if this future will inevitably make or mar our plans, is it not, you ask, the same thing, whether it be Fate, or Law, or God ? By no means. For blind Fate is as cruel and unrelenting as the Furies, holding us firmly fixed in her iron bonds, and with pitiless visage and tearless eye lashing us with whips of scorpions. And Law, unless controlled by something

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higher than itself, is hard as adamant and cold as an iceberg, crushing us beneath its heavy weight, and freezing us to death with its frigid aspect. But the providence of God is something very different to this. It is, to use the words of Jean Paul Richter, "one great eye veiled from our sight by time,—one great infinite heart beating on the other side of the world." * There is no cruelty and no coldness, but heavenly warmth and infinite love. The Lord is full of pity and compassion, and He sends even His judgments in mercy.

To say that man's goings are of the Lord, is but another way of saying what is taught on almost every page of the Bible—that all things are under the providence of God. Not a sparrow can fall to the ground without His permission, and no flower blooms but in obedience to His decree. The grain of sand on the seashore, and the mightiest orb in the stellar heavens, have their places assigned to them by Him. The smallest insect buzzing on the wing, in common with the elephant or the whale, do His bidding; and man, the great master of all, has his goings ordered by the Lord. A foreign poet has beautifully written—

"Yesterday it stormed; the morrow
Dawns upon a blooming land.
For new days no care I'll borrow—
All is ordered by God's hand.
Silk and gold thou may'st be wearing;
In the night have angels wrought,
For the lilies robes preparing,
Beautiful beyond thy thought.
To life's sunny peaks ascending,
Build thy proud house e'er so high,

* Hesperus.

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Birds, on boughs above thee bending,
Sing still nearer to the sky.
Not a care has bird or flower,
Yet in raiment fair they stand :
Joyful is this morning hour,
All is ordered by God's hand." *

There is nothing too large for infinite wisdom to control, and nothing too small for infinite love to care for. Says the author of "Guesses at Truth,"—"In the outward course of events, we are often ready to see the hand of God in great things, but refuse to own it in small. In like manner it often happens that even they who in heavy trials look wholly to God for strength and support, will in lesser matters trust to themselves. This is the source of the weakness and inconsistency betrayed by many, who yet on great occasions will act rightly." When some terrible calamity comes upon us, and the waters of affliction threaten to overwhelm us with their floods, we cry to God out of the depth of our distress, for we recognise His almighty hand; but in a small matter which we fancy we can manage most admirably ourselves, we ask no counsel of the Highest, but scheme and plan on our own account; and the result is too often that we bring upon ourselves defeat and distress.

This great truth, that man's goings are of the Lord, is most terribly lost sight of in these modern days. Never, perhaps, has God's providence been so largely denied, or ignored, as it is to-day. Men buy, and sell, and get gain, taking no account of Him upon whose Divine will every success must depend. Pride and haughtiness are seen on all hands; and he who talks of the interference of God in human affairs, is laughed at as a fool. The dream

* From the German of Eichendorf.

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of independence is pushed to the extreme of being independent of the Almighty. What Satan tried in vain to accomplish,—the deposing of Omnipotence from His throne,—human beings think they have achieved most successfully. There is a Babel-din of confusion in the senseless chatter about Natural Law, and Evolution, and Development, and Natural Selection; but the word God must not be used, unless perhaps as a synonym for the unknown, or the unknowable, or some other meaningless word selected from the jargon of the age. This is a state of things which must bring down upon us, sooner or later, the most terrible judgments. God will not thus allow Himself to be pushed out of His own universe. If science aims at dethroning the Almighty, as it seems to be doing just now, and the increase of a knowledge of Nature leads men to deny Nature's Author, then by science we shall be punished, and through Nature will God's judgments fall upon us thick as hail. Be not deceived: God will not thus suffer Himself to be ignored by the creatures that His hands have made, and especially by those who are more highly endowed than the rest. We live in an age in which we have great cause to rejoice, and great cause to fear. Knowledge abounds, but so does wickedness. Science prevails, and with it unbelief. Education runs hand in hand with ungodliness; and intellect lends herself to the most dishonourable, vile, debasing, and untruthful practices.

But there arises a problem out of this great truth, which the wise King of Israel puts clearly before us: "How, then, can a man understand his own way?"*

That there are mysteries connected with God's govern-

* Prov. xx. 24.

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ment of the world, no one for a moment attempts to deny. In fact, we could hardly expect it to be otherwise. The universe is full of mysteries: awfully sublime and grand they are, too, filling us with awe as we contemplate them. Behind all that which strikes the ear or meets the eye in physical nature, there lies a hidden spiritual force, whose unfoldings, while they charm the senses and touch cords in the deepest recesses of the soul, bewilder and perplex the intellect by their strange and mysterious workings. These spiritual laws are higher than science can reach, and deeper than philosophy can fathom. They set at nought all our wild speculations, and shiver to atoms our theories framed with so much care and skill. Our hypotheses melt away one after another in their presence, and we feel that we are in a land whose beauties give us unheard of delights, but whose problems perplex and bewilder.

> "Our little systems have their day;
> They have their day, and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.
> We have but faith, we cannot know;
> For knowledge is of things we see;
> And yet we trust it comes from Thee,—
> A beam in darkness let it grow."*

The great problem as to how we can reconcile the freedom of man with the purposes and plans of the Almighty, we may never be able thoroughly to solve, but we know enough to guide us in our path through life. That we are free we feel and know, and that God rules in the world is a fact no less certain. The difficulty of reconciling these facts is not peculiar to the Christian, for if God be got rid of, it can only be to elevate natural law

* Tennyson.

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to His throne, and there is but a change of name, without any light being thrown upon the question. Freedom in the bounds of law is as difficult to understand as freedom under the government of God, and indeed much more so, for a conscious personal Being can grant to His creatures a liberty which blind laws are incompetent to bestow.

The question, however, "How can a man, then, understand his own way?" probably does not mean how can he solve the problem of his freedom, but how shall he know what lies in his path in the future. What is the fate that is in store for him? What joys or sorrows, fortunes or misfortunes, will hereafter befall him? Is the road that he has to travel smooth and even, and fringed with daisies and violets, or is it rugged and stony, with thorns and brambles on either side meeting across it, and forming a tangled skein in its very centre, through which he must push his way with labour, difficulty, and pain? Alas! who knows? These are of the secret things which belong unto God.

"Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescribed, their present state;
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:
Or who could suffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy Reason, would he skip and play?
Pleased to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.
Oh, blindness to the future kindly given,
That each may fill the circle marked by Heaven." *

Our future is a book the leaves of which are turned over one by one as the days go by; but what is inscribed on to-morrow's page we do not know and cannot learn,

* Pope.

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And our very ignorance here is bliss, for a knowledge of the future would considerably interfere with our work in the present, and by no means add to our happiness. We know that we shall die; but when—that is a secret which no man can tell us. We make rough guesses respecting our future, but they seldom turn out to be correct. Events will occur to-morrow which we never expected, and those that we anticipate will probably not happen. In human life it is always so, and will be to the end of the chapter.

But here lies our consolation. If we cannot see the future of our way, our "goings are of the Lord." There is no cruel and unrelenting fate to seize us up with its iron wheels and hurry us into its huge machinery to be torn to shreds and thrown out again as worthless rubbish. Nor is there a blind chance to play at battledore and shuttlecock with human lives, leaving the result uncertain. Neither are we wound in the meshes of the net of unconscious law. We are the children of a Divine Father who loves us and cares for us, and who not only knows our future, but plans and arranges the whole thing for us. What we want is more trust in God, more reliance upon Him, and more confidence in His everlasting care for His creatures. We do not know what awaits us to-morrow; but what of that? God does, and our future is in His keeping. Whatever happens will be for the best, if we are true and faithful servants. Our lives are hid with Christ in God, and there they are safe. I often envy those old Calvinists of an earlier time their strong faith in God. With what confidence they went to work! with what energy they pursued their tasks! and what amazing faith they brought to bear upon the most trifling events of life! They believed in a special providence of God, and

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they acted upon it. They held firmly to the doctrine of Divine decrees, and they resigned themselves body and soul, in life and in death, into God's keeping. Predestination to them meant having the Almighty always on their side, and this gave them strength and energy and purpose. Nothing discouraged them; a thousand failures did not dishearten them; no opposition could overcome them; for were they not doing God's work, which He had ordained them to do, and was not success therefore certain? We to-day want more of this faith and confidence in God. We talk glibly, though often very vaguely, about Providence, but the doctrine has no hold on our hearts. We say that we are God's children, and that of course He cares for us, but we have a strong fear all the while that we may be neglected and overlooked. We are ever ready to proclaim that "the Lord will provide," but we do a good deal of scheming on our own account all the same, without asking how far our plans are in harmony with His will.

Many of our trials and troubles are sent to try our faith, and how wofully does it break down under them! Our religion lies too much on the surface—its roots do not strike deeply enough into our hearts; and consequently when the waters of affliction come—as come they will to us all—our trust in God gets washed away, and we are left in a state of utter wretchedness. We talk about tribulation being the lot of the Christian, but we hope to get as little of it as possible, and we snatch greedily at any way of escape from it, however questionable. The age in which we live, and the surroundings that envelope us, are not favourable to trust in God. Men are in the habit of trusting too much to the things of this world;

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then, when these fail, they are left without hope. God therefore sends us trials and sorrows and disappointments, to show us how futile and fickle are all matters that belong to earth, and to point us the road that leads to Himself. The Divine methods are exceedingly various, some of them very mysterious, but all teeming with beneficence. To-day we are prosperous, to-morrow we fall into adversity. In the morning a joy, in the evening a grief. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Some prayers He answers by granting the request, and others by withholding the coveted boon. Now we walk in the bright sunshine of His presence, and now come clouds and mists from hell, shutting out for a time all the Divine glory. Yet our present, as our future, is in His keeping. It is enough for us that our steps are ordered by Him. Let us say, therefore, with Dr. Newman—

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom;
Lead Thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step's enough for me.
I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead Thou me on.
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.
So long Thy power has blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on.
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have lost long since, and lost awhile."

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Worship and its Modern Substitutes.

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"A culture, therefore, which ignores religion is essentially defective. It forgets that our powers must culminate in worship ere they bear their noblest fruit. Wordsworth used to say that the man who despised anything in nature had 'faculties which he had never used.' And the same may be said of those who omit the faculty of worship from their inventory of the powers of the soul. They are to that extent defective as men, and a singular Nemesis attends them. The very faculty in course of time vanishes; the repressed instinct ceases to exert itself; they become accustomed to the want of it, and ultimately deny the existence of it."—NORTH BRITISH REVIEW.

"I see and I adore—O God, most bounteous!
O infinite of goodness and of glory!
The knee that Thou hast shaped, shall bend to Thee;
The tongue which Thou hast tuned shall chant Thy praise;
And Thine own image, the immortal soul,
Shall consecrate herself to Thee for ever."

CHRISTOPHER SMART.

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IV.

WORSHIP AND ITS MODERN SUBSTITUTES.

MAN is related to everything with which he comes into contact, and this relationship is of various degrees, according to the objects considered. Let an individual standing on the broad earth look around him at the various things which meet his gaze, and he will be struck with the principle of unity that pervades them, and the mode in which they are linked and interlinked with each other. There are wide differences, no doubt; but there are points where the lines that separate them overlap, and where each possesses qualities in common with the other. Man himself is no exception to this rule. He is related to that part of the physical universe which is usually called organic; that is, the portion which not being organised does not live. For did not every atom of which his body is composed—its oxygen, its carbon, its hydrogen, its nitrogen, and the numerous other substances which go to make up its tissues—come originally from this source, and will it not have some day to be rendered up and given back to the mass from which it was originally obtained? Not only so, but during the whole period of his earthly life two streams are continually flowing in opposite directions between his physical frame and the external world. At every moment his body is

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throwing off portions of effete matter, particles that have done their work, and are consequently no longer of any value, and the deficiency thus occasioned has to be supplied daily by the food taken. Then the relationship that he sustains to things that live—plants and animals—is yet more intimate, since the bonds of vitality bind them together. Whatever life may be—and at present no one knows—it is shared by the most insignificant plant,—the torulæ of yeast, for example,—the tiniest animalcule disporting itself in a drop of water, and by man himself. His relationship to those higher animals in whom a lower kind of psychical phenomena are manifested is closer still. For these share with him, in however small a degree, some of the marvellous powers of mind. And above all these, he is most intimately related to his fellow-men. Here he is bound in the social bond which compels a consideration for the rest of humankind. Even amongst savages some sort of social order is recognised, and some kind of moral law held to be binding. This latter is no doubt in many cases based upon policy and moulded by expediency; still it is there. Thus man is related more or less to everything that he sees or hears, or in any way perceives. His highest relationship of all is to God. As his material organisation was derived from the material universe, so his spiritual part owes its being to the great source of spirit. And to this he is bound by ties which are permanent and indissoluble. Upon the connexion herein established all worship is based, and from it springs.

God is the source of all goodness, all truth, all wisdom, and all love; in Him alone can these qualities be found to perfection, and from Him they must all be derived. His

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dwelling is in the interiors of things, and must not be sought for in the outward and inane. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in God. And if in our search after truth we stop at the outside, and rest content with the sensuous world, we shall inevitably be disappointed, and find ourselves in possession of cheats and deceptions, instead of realities. True worship must spring from the deepest recesses of the soul, and must be directed to Him who has been admirably described as the

> "Creator of all beauty, all delight,—
> The infinite, the everlasting God,—
> The One pure Spirit." *

Worship has been sometimes traced to the awe that one experiences in the presence of the majestic phenomena of the physical universe, sometimes to reverence, and sometimes to the sentiment of veneration; but it is more than each of these, or all of them combined. No doubt they enter largely into its composition, but it lies deeper down in the soul than any of them, and has a sphere in human nature peculiarly its own. "Worship," says Channing, "is man's highest end, for it is the employment of his highest faculties and affections on the sublimest object. We have much for which to thank God, but for nothing so much as the power of knowing and adoring Himself. This creation is a glorious spectacle, but there is a more glorious existence for our minds and hearts, and that is the Creator. There is something divine in the faculties by which we study the visible world, and subject it to our wills, comfort, enjoyment. But it is a diviner faculty by which we penetrate beyond

* Edwin Atherstone.

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the visible, free ourselves of the finite and the mutable, and ascend to the infinite and the eternal. It is good to make earth and ocean, winds and flames, suns and stars, tributary to our present well-being: how much better to make them minister to our spiritual wants, teachers of heavenly truth, guides to a more glorious Being than themselves, bonds of union between man and his Maker!" Religion is an essential element of human nature: no civilisation can outgrow it, no science advance beyond it, and no scepticism destroy it. And everywhere it finds expression in some form of worship. The profoundest of human wants is the want of God; the deepest instinct in our nature is that which prompts us to pray. Worship is older than government, and has a deeper root in human nature than the social law itself. The mightiest civilisations that the world has seen, not only came after it, but to a large extent owed to it their very existence.

The universality of worship no sceptic can account for. I have often been told, in the debates that I have held with unbelievers, that it arose through ignorance. This, however, is no explanation, for the question still arises, Why did ignorance in all lands and in all times take this particular direction? According to the notion prevalent amongst those who reject Divine revelation, man originated in distinct centres, far removed from each other, and many races have in their past history had no sort of intercourse. How, then, did it happen that they should all agree to select some object of worship? Besides, so far from devotion springing from ignorance, it is the most ignorant tribes that are always referred to by the sceptic as being without a form of worship. He never pretends to point to a civilised race, either in ancient or modern

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times, who were destitute of religion, but invariably quotes savages when requested to name a people without religious ideas. Thus it would seem to follow from his own position that religion was the result of intelligence rather than of the want of knowledge. But in truth it was neither the one nor the other. It springs from the religious faculty in man, which is as marked in its operation as the appetite for food. The first buildings which architecture produced were in all probability temples in which the worshipper could perform religious rites; and the earliest poems were hymns of praise to God. Men's hopes and fears and joys, and grateful thanksgivings everywhere, in the earliest ages took a religious shape. This fact needs explanation. Sometimes it is said that religion owes its existence to the priest, which is about as reasonable as to say that butchers and bakers created the appetite for food in order to sell their wares. Is it not obvious that the priest himself is the outcome of religion? If there had not been a religious sentiment, an instinct for worship, to which he could appeal, the priest would have been an impossibility. It has been too common for priests to use religion as a means for their own personal aggrandisement. By it they have tyrannised over peoples, trampled freedom beneath their feet, and crushed out every spark of liberty from the nations where they have held sway. But this only proves how powerful was the instinct to which they made their appeal. Had there been another sentiment which they could have used with greater likelihood of success, to it they would unquestionably have turned for aid in prosecuting their nefarious designs. But there was not. The religious sentiment is more powerful than any other tendency in

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human nature; this the priest knew full well, and hence the use he made of it in subserving his purpose. In the earliest ages men looked to the heavens for support and consolation, and they deemed no earthly institutions secure which were not based upon the foundation of religion. Ancient legislators found the advantage of speaking in a higher name than man's, and of making an appeal to something more binding than any human law. And this was supplied by religion.

> "The high-born soul
> Disdains to rest her heaven-aspiring wing
> Beneath its native quarry. Tired of earth
> And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft." *

Human nature possesses spiritual capacities, and these require to be cultivated. The spiritual part of man needs food just as certainly as does his physical frame. And this is to be found only in religion. Truth will satisfy the intellect, but not the affections: these must find their sustenance elsewhere. The word religion has been I think properly traced to two Latin words which signify to re-bind or fasten again. From the very elements which enter therefore into its composition, it is the binding over again that which has broken away, or got loose,—the reuniting of man to God. Its purpose is to re-attach the human soul to the source of all good by a chain whose every link is love. All history and all experience testify to the necessity of this being done. Religion, as I have already said, is everywhere. Frequently it has become degraded, and associated with brutal rites and useless ceremonies; but the truth that it contains has never altogether disappeared.

* Akenside.

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Corroding cancers of falsity have occasionally eaten into its very vitals, but it has survived notwithstanding, and has again come forth renewed and in the full vigour of youth. Man was created for heaven and destined for immortality, and religion is the means appointed by God for the attainment of this end. He who does not worship, cuts himself off from the most perfect happiness in this world, to say nothing of the great hereafter. He who does not worship, did I say?—Is there such a person? It is very questionable. Our sceptical scientists pull down the word God from their small Pantheon, but they write up in its place Evolution, or Law, or Nature, and they write it with a capital letter, and fall prostrate at the wretched Abstraction that they have made to do duty for Deity. "Man," says Dr. Vaughan, "worthy of the name has always something above him; in other words, something to reverence. He cannot live without it. There is but an alternative. The man who has nothing else above him has self, that ugliest, most obscene of deities,—Belial, and Mammon, and Beelzebub in one. Self is the deity of millions; and its worship is as vile, as brutalising, as ever were the rites of Chemosh, or Milcom, or Ashtaroth. In general, even fallen man has something besides self above him: even where self presides in the worship, it is still rather as priest than as idol."* A nation of men indifferent to some form of religion has never existed, and never can exist. The lower part of human nature, man's untamed passions and vicious propensities, when directed against a pure and holy religion, have generally sought to pervert it, not to destroy it; and in this it has often been successful. The religion itself

* Christ satisfying the Instincts of Humanity, p. 33.

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comes from its Divine source with sanctions too poweful to be altogether disregarded.

Take worship out of the world, and you degrade man, not to a savage simply, but to a brute. Even Socrates tells us that man is naturally and differentially a religious being, and that in cases where this does not appear he is not in his normal condition, not himself. In sorrow and in trouble, when the heart is sad, and the brain in a whirl of despair, to whom can we turn for real consolation but to the Heavenly Father who does not disregard the wants of the meanest of His children? There are hours in the lives of all of us when the darkness in which we grope our way seems so dense that no ray of earthly light can penetrate it, and when we stagger and reel like a drunken man beneath the heavy burdens that we have to bear. In these times of dire distress, when our hopes are destroyed one by one, our plans frustrated, our schemes brought to nought, and the splendid castles that we had built in the air lie in ruins around us, but for trust in God we should go mad, or, like the ancients and some moderns, seek for release in death. Wealth and fame and power all fail to bring us the comfort that we need. But God is ever near. We bend the knee in worship, and breathe forth a prayer, inarticulate it may be, but real and sincere, and we become strong, and filled with trust and consolation. What Christian man or woman is there that has not experienced this again and again? One of the most brilliant of infidel writers in this age thus speaks: "Though the garden of thy life be wholly waste, the sweet flowers withered, the fruit trees barren, over its wall hang the rich dark clusters of the vine of death within easy reach of thy hand, which may pluck

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them when it will." Suicide is the remedy for despair. Contrast this fearful gospel of self-destruction with the experiences of the Christian in affliction. Hear the language of the Psalmist: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." In deepest suffering, he who worships God, and trusts in the Divine Providence, will find such real solid consolation, that he will experience no disposition to rashly and wickedly pluck the grapes of death with his own hand. To him sorrow comes as a messenger of love, an angel of mercy whose sable wings are fringed with gold; and he knows that behind the clouds the sun is still shining, and will by-and-by burst through the mists, and chase away the gloom. Mrs. Browning beautifully says,—

"'There is no God,' the foolish saith,
But none, 'there is no sorrow;'
And nature, oft the cry of faith,
In better need will borrow.

Eyes that the preacher could not school,
By wayside graves are raised;
And lips cry, 'God, be pitiful,'
That ne'er said, 'God be praised.'"

The most degrading religious systems that the world has seen are much to be preferred to atheism; and worship associated with the most puerile ceremonies and the most absurd rites is far more noble than the absence of worship altogether.

One of the most powerful illustrations of the necessity for some kind of worship will be found in the substitutes for it which sceptics in our day are in the habit of resort-

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ing to. It would seem that even those who deny the existence of God and the spiritual nature of man, feel that they must have a religion, and with it some form of worship.

Many of the Secularists maintain that secularism is a religion, whose temple is the universe, and whose god is nature. Mr. Holyoake, who may be considered the founder of the system, and its high priest, observes: "Deem me not blind to the magnificence of nature, or the beauties of art, because I interpret their language differently from others. I thrill in the presence of the dawn of the day, and exult in the glories of the setting sun. Whether the world wears her ebon and jewelled crown of night, or the day walks wonderingly forth over the face of nature, to me,

> "Not the slightest leaf, but trembling teems
> With golden visions and romantic dreams."

It is not in a low but in an exalted estimate of nature that my rejection of the popular "theology arises. The wondrous manifestations of nature indispose me to degrade it to a secondary rank." * Thus nature is the supreme existence, and must not be lowered. But nature is not conscious nor possessed of intelligence, and therefore after all it must take a secondary place when compared with man himself, even if there were no God. Elsewhere, this foremost Secularist highly commends the lines of Coleridge as expressing the true sentiment of worship:—

> "He prayeth well who loveth well,
> Both man, and bird, and beast;

* Trial of Theism, p. 157.

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He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;—
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made, and loveth, all."

These lines, however, are not atheistic; in fact, they express true theism; and how an atheist can approve of them it is difficult to understand. But the objection that we feel to them is that they attempt to substitute love to the creature for affection towards the Creator. It is very doubtful, however, whether any one who does not love God first, can thus love all inferior things. But if he could, however commendable such love might be—and it is no doubt very praiseworthy—it most certainly is not worship, and cannot be accepted as a substitute for religion. Many, many years ago, whilst I was what is called a Freethinker, and when I should have been accepted as an authority on secularism, I wrote some lines on this very question of worship which I believe still appear in secular hymn-books. So intensely did I feel in my inmost soul the need for some sort of religion, and so satisfied was I that there was a deep, heartfelt interest in man's nature prompting him to worship, that I felt compelled to endeavour to meet this universal want. Hence I wrote—

"They tell us that we worship not,
Nor sing sweet songs of praise,
That love Divine is not our lot
In these cold modern days;
That piety's calm, peaceful state
We banish from the earth:
They know not that we venerate
Whate'er we see of worth:

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The singing of the birds on high,
The rippling of the stream,
The sparkling stars in yon bright sky,
The sunlight's merry gleam.
The ocean's wide and watery main,
The lightning's vivid flash;
The sweet and gentle showers of rain,
The awful thunder's crash;
The trees and flowers that deck the land,
The soft and grassy mead,
The firm-set earth on which we stand,
Are worshipful indeed.
We venerate great Nature's plan,
And worship at her shrine;
While goodness, truth, and love in man,
We hold to be divine."

The true sentiment of worship is here, but not the true object. Nature cannot meet the want of the heart in its aspirations after God. Suns and stars, and trees and flowers, and rolling waters and singing birds, will all fail to satisfy the deep needs of the human soul, though you sing to them till you are hoarse, and shout yourself into a frenzy in vociferating their praises. But the fact that men who ignore the worship of God do make an idol of nature is a conclusive proof of the reality of the instinct that prompts to prayer and to praise.

A curious substitute for religious worship has recently been propounded under the name of Cosmic Emotion. The term originated with Mr. Henry Sidgwick, and it was eagerly seized hold of by the late Professor Clifford, whose atheism was of the most dogmatic and of the most offensive kind. All that appears to be meant by it is the emotion that is called up in the soul when contemplating itself and its moral nature on the one hand, and the mysteries of the physical universe on the other. It is that

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feeling mentioned by Kant, and referred to in Lord Houghton's lines—

> "Two things I contemplate with ceaseless awe,
> The stars of heaven and man's sense of law."

Professor Clifford remarks in reference to this, "For the star-full sky on a clear night is the most direct presentation of the sum of things that we can find, and from the nature of the circumstance is fitted to produce a cosmic emotion of the first kind. And the moral faculty of man was thought by Kant as possessing universality in a peculiar sense; for the form of all right maxims, according to him, is that they are fit for universal law, applicable to all intelligent beings whatever. This mode of viewing the faculty is clearly well adapted for producing a cosmic emotion of the second kind."* The article from which this quotation is made is garnished with long quotations from Walt Whitman and Mr. Swinburne,—names which will assuredly not carry much weight in religious circles. But what sort of a substitute can this cosmic emotion furnish for religion? Assuredly none whatever. Such a worship as this—if worship it can be called—has no *cult*, and cannot therefore meet the conditions which all true worship must fulfil.

That there is profound mystery in the cosmos, no man—especially if he be a religious man—will deny. On all hands we have to confront it, and often it is so appalling as to awe us into silence. We feel abashed and humbled in its presence. Usually it is atheists who think they can tear all the mystery out of God's universe with their philosophising and their scientific appliances;—certainly not Christians. We are ever ready to exclaim—

* Nineteenth Century, Oct. 1877, p. 412.

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"Man walks in fear, and sleeps in mystery,—
All that our senses feed on, only seems
Stretched o'er the door-sill of eternity.
Our dreams are wakening, and our wakening dreams:
The sad experience of our riper age,
A shadow lengthening as the sun goes down;
Nature herself, for every open page,
Some leaf forbidden folds with mystic frown." *

There is a profound sympathy between nature and ourselves which tells us that behind the material phenomena, with their forces and their laws, there must exist a Being whose spiritual nature corresponds with our own. Nature reflects our feelings and our moods; is gay or sombre as we are glad or sorrowful. A deep mystery, no less religious than metaphysical, pervades the entire universe, and men in all ages have recognised this fact. The universe means the one, and its very unity has largely added to the profound awe that we feel in its presence. To the materialist, it may appear but a collection of atoms of matter governed by law, but to the man of true reverence, whose spirit has been purified by religion, there is more, much more, in it than this.

"There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture: she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, the gnomed mine;
Unweave a rainbow."

There is a mystery and a beauty in the rainbow still, despite the fact that we know its composition, and how it is formed. If this be Cosmic Emotion, then we say that

* A. B. Richards.

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we drink deeper into its spirit, and appreciate it more highly than any atheist can possibly do. For we maintain that its cause lies in profounder depths than matter is possessed of, and that its existence proves a Being transcending natural phenomena and physical law. But, after all, this emotion, although it partakes of a religious character, is not religion, and by itself can never prove a substitute for prayer and praise. Indeed, its existence renders true worship all the more necessary. That men should seek to substitute it for communion with God only proves what shadows and semblances will be clutched at when the reality has been lost.

The Positivists, despite the fact that they disbelieve altogether in God, or at all events hold that if such a Being exists, nothing whatever can possibly be known of Him by man, yet meet together for religious worship. They offer up their adorations to what they are pleased to term "abstract humanity." What this is, it is not very easy clearly to understand. It is, of course, a mere blank abstraction—deaf to hear, and powerless to answer. Humanity in the concrete we know something of, and our experience of it is sad and melancholy. It is neither sufficiently exalted nor pure enough to become an object of worship, and as such to satisfy the deep religious nature of man. This abstract humanity is talked of as "holy," and human relationship is called "sacred,"—terms assuredly much out of place in connection with such matters. Individual men are not holy, but just the reverse. And how can that exist in the mass which was absent in the individual parts of which the whole is made up? Then wherein consists the sacredness of any of the relationships existing between man and man, if God be taken away,

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we are not told. It seems to be a characteristic of this system to use a religious terminology whilst it denies religion. Professor Huxley I think it was who described it as Roman Catholicism without Christianity. It has a priesthood and a ritual, but no religion; an elaborate form of worship, but no God. Much talk there is of human brotherhood, but how there can be any brotherhood without a common parentage it does not trouble itself to explain. Take away the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man falls to the ground, for it has no basis upon which it can rest. Positivism professes to find its cultus in dead heroes and sages. But this, to say the least of it, is a miserable substitute for an almighty and loving Father in heaven. The worship of dead philosophers cannot satisfy the heartfelt wants of humanity. Yet what evidence it furnishes us with of the fact that men must worship something, and failing to find the true God, they make idols to supply His place. Once these idols were carved out of wood or stone; now they consist of figments of a wild and disordered imagination. In one respect, Positivism bears testimony of a most important character to the value, if not to the truth, of Christianity. It seeks to satisfy the instinct of worship by gathering up into a grand whole the highest virtues of humanity, and presenting them in an ideal person which it holds up before the mind of the worshipper. Christianity embodies all the virtues of all the ages in a real Person who once lived on the earth as a man, and having passed away, is alive for evermore, and dwells spiritually in the hearts of all who are brought to accept Him as their Saviour. Hence it meets the wants of the highest, and can be taken hold of by the lowest.

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"Blessed it is, O Christ, to feel Thee near
In all Thy love, and sympathy, and power;
To find Thy gracious presence quicken, cheer,
And satisfy the spirit hour by hour.
The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Thee;
And Thee in wondrous love the Father gave,
That Thou, Immanuel, God with us, shouldst be,
And us redeem, and to the utmost save.
How precious art Thou, Son of God, to those
Who fully in Thy glorious self confide:
They have in Thee salvation, strength, repose;
Thou dost with them in all Thy grace abide.
O Jesus! Saviour! Friend! be with me still:
May I still more and more delight in Thee;
In me Thy presence evermore fulfil,
And glorified in me for ever be."

We come now to the true object of religious worship. "He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." There can be but one true object of worship. Our Lord in His rebuke to Satan exclaims, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."* There is an important relationship pointed out in both of these passages between the worshipper and the Being worshipped. He is "thy Lord" and "thy God." In all the universe there is and can be but One, the worship of whom can satisfy the soul. Any attempt on the part of another to occupy His throne must result in a failure which is terrible to contemplate. He is thy God, or thou hast no God, but a miserable semblance in the place of one,—a spurious and counterfeit thing, as unreal as a will-o'-the-wisp.

In all ages there has been a tendency in the human mind, corroded by the cancer of sin and permeated by iniquity, to some form of idolatry. And the idols have

* Matt. iv. 10.

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taken shape from the age which has witnessed them. Again and again we have seen the heavenly bodies and other parts of the material universe elevated into deities before which men have prostrated themselves in worship. Even amongst the Jews, to whom a revelation of the true God had been made, idolatry of this kind was by no means uncommon; and hence, distributed over the Old Testament are to be found innumerable warnings against it, accompanied by threats of Divine judgments that should fall upon those who were disobedient to the command. "Take heed to yourselves," said the Divine Lawgiver, that when "thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven," lest thou "shouldst be driven to worship them."* Other forms of idolatry also occasionally caused this highly favoured people to depart from the statutes of the true God, and to violate the clear and explicit mandates of heaven.

Amongst the nations who had not been blessed with a knowledge of revelation, idolatry was much more common. And this idolatry has usually been in keeping with the character of the people amongst whom it has existed. The early founders of the Aryan race had for their teachers the sun and the stars, day and night, the light and the darkness, summer and winter, sunshine and storm; and these they personified, and in course of time worshipped. They were a simple pastoral people, and, as far as we can judge, their worship, although idolatrous, was not impure. Not so with some of their descendants. The Hellenic branch which crossed the Hellespont, and settled in Greece, became the most highly civilised people

* Deut. iv. 19.

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in the world; and yet, running side by side with their culture, erudition, and refinement, was to be found an idolatry disgustingly impure and licentious,—the fearfully immoral character of whose rites was profligate beyond description. And the worship of the Latin branch was no less foul and polluted. Men of the worst character were deified, and to the gods were ascribed every conceivable kind of impurity. In a public debate that I held some years since with a leading sceptic, my opponent complained of Christianity that it had destroyed the beautiful worship of Greece and Rome, and substituted a crucified man for the splendid gods of Olympus. I replied that these grand and noble deities were a set of disgusting and profligate debauchees, and that, were they here in the flesh to-day, they would be kicked out of all decent society. The worshipper made gods to his own taste, and they were consequently largely copies of himself. He stamped his own character upon them. In India and Persia the idolatry was more mystic, but at the same time more pure. To-day, as I have already shown, we have the worship of abstractions,—a form of idolatry in keeping with the character of the age. Thus do men lose themselves in the mists and fogs of error, when they shut their eyes to the bright sunlight of God's truth.

The true object of worship must possess certain well-known qualities in order to meet the wants of the worshipper.

1. *He must be a conscious, personal Being.*—Abstractions will not answer the required purpose. "The stream of tendency" talked of by Matthew Arnold is as unsubstantial as a stream of moonshine, and far less useful. Man needs

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spiritual help, consolation, and support amidst the trials and afflictions of life; and these can only be obtained from a personal Being. What can it avail one to pray to "Abstract Humanity," to praise the powers and forces of the Universe, to call for help upon Natural Law, to adore the "Absolute," to fall prostrate at the shrine of the "Unknowable," or to experience "Cosmic Emotion"? When a man is overwhelmed by the waters of affliction until the floods have swept away every earthly prop, and engulfed all of this world that he can fix his hopes upon, it is the hollowest of all hollow mockeries to talk to him of streams of tendency, or the sacredness of human nature, or the potency of force, or any other wild chimera of the imagination. He wants help, and he cries out for assistance; and there is none to be had from these absurd abstractions; for they can neither hear nor respond. Let him say with David, "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever,"* and he will obtain new strength, fresh courage, and the support which he needs. Spiritual wants can only be supplied from a spiritual source; and suns and stars and material forces are not spiritual. These can impress the senses, but not console the heart, or feed the soul. Personality is an essential attribute of the Being that is to be worshipped. Even the lowest kind of idolater ascribed a sort of personality to his fetish; for without that how could it hear or answer his supplications? The Christian's God is the Lord—the Eternal One, who is conscious of His children's wants, hears and hearkens to their prayers, and does not disregard their cries for succour and support. God is Spirit, the Fountain and

* Psalm lxxiii. 26.

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Source of Spirit, but withal a Person, with whom communion on the part of His weak and erring children is not only possible, but an established fact testified to by the experience of millions of our race.

2. *He must be supremely powerful.*—It would be idle to worship a being whose power to help is limited, because he might lack ability to aid us at the very point where we needed his assistance. With the Persian, following the teaching of his so-called sacred book, the Zend-Avesta, there are two eternal beings in perpetual conflict. Ormuzd and the six bright angels of light who do his bidding are constantly warred against by Ahriman and the six dark demons who obey his behest. This battle takes place both in nature and in the human soul. No guarantee can there be for the ultimate triumph of goodness, because there is no certainty that the Creator of Lights, with his amshaspands, can ever obtain a final victory over his equally powerful antagonist: indeed it is tolerably certain that he cannot. This conception of God is totally inadequate to satisfy the soul in its struggles after virtue, its conflicts with sin, and its aspirations after holiness. Yet says one who was competent to judge of the matter, "In the measure of her moral sensibility, Persia may be fairly ranked among the brightest spots of ancient heathendom."* How intensely dark, then, must have been the rest! When man calls upon God for succour and support, he wants to feel quite sure that there is ability to render the desired help, as well as willingness to aid, on the part of the Being into whose ear he pours his supplications. If there are two equally powerful and coeternal existences thwarting the plans and frustrating the pur-

* Hardwick's Christ and other Masters, vol. ii., p. 393.

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poses of each other, there can be no safe ground for reliance upon either. Mr. John Stuart Mill seems also to have arrived at the conclusion that the powers of Deity were limited—not, however, by an antagonistic conscious being frustrating His designs, but by the unwieldy nature of the materials with which He has to deal.* Mr. Mill thinks that God has done the best He could for man, but the best is somewhat bad after all. Such a Deity as this cannot meet the demands of the great heart of universal humanity. The Being that man wants to fall back upon must be all-powerful, since if He lacks this quality we cannot pray to Him in humble and abiding trust, nor place ourselves unreservedly in His hands. But the Deity whom we worship is omnipotent, and nothing can limit His Divine power. "Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased." † "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" ‡ "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever." §

3. *He must be all-good.*—We cannot worship what we cannot love. True worship must be based upon love. Ahriman may by his power provoke fear, but can never call forth affection. Jove may hurl abroad his thunderbolts, striking terror into the hearts of affrighted men and maidens, but he neither demands nor expects the love of his worshippers. The abstractions which modern philosophers elevate into the seat of the Almighty are pure creations of the intellect, but they make no claim on the affections. The God of the Bible is a God of goodness.

* *Vide* Nature, Utility of Religion and Theism.

† Psalm cxv. 3. ‡ Jer. xxxii. 27. § Rom. xi. 36.

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This is His grand and distinguishing characteristic. "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."* "O taste and see that the Lord is good."† "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever."‡ We want guarantees that virtue shall some day triumph, and vice and sin be destroyed. And this we have in the Scriptures, and nowhere else. The moral law is most intimately associated with religion; in point of fact, it must find its basis here, or remain with no foundation upon which it can securely rest. Reason and the Bible both agree in proclaiming the fact that God is the great and Holy One, whose mercy is everlasting, and whose goodness knows no bounds. In our sorrows and our afflictions we recognise not the results of invariable law, or a stern and unbending fate, much less the tortures of spiritual beings, who make merry with our sufferings, and to whom our heartfelt pangs are matters for sport and pastime; but the will of a benevolent Father who doth not afflict willingly, and who intends, in all that happens to us, our everlasting good. Even in our sins we are not pursued by the vengeful Eumenides, "the swart hounds" of Adraste who seek only our destruction, but are punished by the moral law impressed into our being by One who is perfectly holy, and whom, without holiness, no man can see. "God is love." This is the grandest and sublimest truth ever made known to man; and upon this truth all genuine worship must be based. God loved us while we were yet alienated from Him, and in His everlasting love He provided a plan of salvation, and endeavoured to bring us to His fold. The true worshipper of a God of

* Psalm xxxiii. 5.
† Psalm xxxiv. 8.
‡ Psalm cvii. 1.

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love must himself be filled with love. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." *

4. *He must be revealed to man.*—The unknown God of modern science, like the unknown God of the ancients, is of no value to humanity. In order to worship God, we must know His character and the requirements of His Divine law. Fully comprehend His essential Nature of course we never can, but we must learn something of Him before we can approach His throne in prayer and supplication. Mr. Holyoake observes: "Suppose what we will, we shall still stand like children on the shores of eternity, who must look forward with wistful and unsatisfied curiosity." † But although this is the position of the Atheist and the Agnostic, it is by no means that of the Christian. He does know something of the fathomless sea of eternity, and of Him who presides over its boundless waves. The God who inhabits eternity is his God, and he loves Him, and holds communion with Him, day by day and hour by hour. In the Bible we learn that God is our Creator, that in Him "we live and move and have our being;" and, what is to us of much greater import, that He is our Father, and that we are His children; that He not only cares for us as subjects of His kingdom, but that He ever manifests towards us the tender compassion of a Parent. This is a glorious and blessed truth. "Our Father." There is more in these two simple words than in all the volumes of philosophy ever written. You may live with a man, dwell under the same roof with him, come daily into contact with him, and even share in his pursuits and his labours, and yet not know him. His intellect, erudition, culture, and

* 1 John iv. 16. † Trial of Theism, p. 43.

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genius, may stand constantly revealed before you; but these do not constitute the man, and you may still remain in utter ignorance of his true character. A human being is not what his intellectual attainments indicate, but what his affections make him. Learn what a man loves, and you have at once the key to his character, the revelation of his inner self. The real spiritual nature of each one of us is shown in what our affections are fixed upon. We cannot add to the happiness of those by whom we are surrounded by any amount of learning and talent, for these may be cold as marble, and their brightness but the reflection of light in blocks of ice, chilling all the more for their brilliancy. What is really requisite is that we should shed around us rays of affection, of kindness, of sympathy, and of tenderest love. So to know God as a Being of infinite power and boundless wisdom is only to overwhelm us with an awe which frightens and appals. But to learn that He loves us, and pities us, as a tender and considerate Father, sympathises with us in our sufferings, and has His Divine ear ever open to our cries for help, never disregarding the humble prayers of the meanest of us,—that is really to know Him in a sense which can bring consolation amid the direst calamities of life. And thus the Eternal One stands revealed to us in the Scriptures, which in His Divine consideration for our lost and fallen state He has given to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

Our worship, therefore, is not confined to the intellect, but includes all the affections in its embrace. We go not to the throne of grace as a matter of cold form or laborious duty, but prompted by the deepest affections of

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the heart. To pray and to praise is our delight, because we love the Being to whom our petitions and thanksgivings are offered, and in whose eyes they are acceptable only so far as they ascend from the pure altar of the affections. Communion with God is not simply our duty —it is the highest privilege that we possess on earth.

By-and-by our prayers for help will be changed into praises for our final deliverance,—our sorrows ended, our griefs and struggles over, the victory gained, the goal reached, the everlasting inheritance entered upon, and our souls filled with the fulness of God. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, and all creation shall join in the grand and glorious song which has now been in existence for fifteen hundred years, but which is ever new :—

" We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting.
To Thee all angels cry aloud: the heavens and all the powers therein.
To Thee, Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry,
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth ;
Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory."

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One God, and One Mediator between God and Man.

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"Through the instrumentality of Platonism, the idea of God becomes clearer and purer. Man had learned that communion with the Divinity was something more than an apotheosis of humanity, or a pantheistic absorption. He caught glimpses of a higher and holier union. He had surrendered the ideal of a national communion with God, and of personal protection through a federal religion, and now was thrown back upon himself to find some channel of approach to God. But, alas! he could not find it. A God so vastly elevated beyond human comprehension, who could only be apprehended by the most painful effort of abstract thought; a God so infinitely removed from man by the purity and rectitude of His character; a God who was all pure reason,—seemed alien to all the yearnings and sympathies of the human heart; and such a God dwelling in pure light seemed inapproachable and inaccessible to man."—DR. COCKER.

"That God which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off Divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

TENNYSON.

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V.

ONE GOD, AND ONE MEDIATOR.

A MODERN writer has most truthfully remarked: "Amidst the entire circuit of that heathen-life there runs two streams; first, the broad river of moral and intellectual failure; but parallel with that, or amidst it, a slender and yet persevering and most striking current of human longing for something better—aspirations for an unattained illumination, springing from a haunting consciousness of some hidden capacity of good never unfolded. At considerable intervals you see these tokens of a deep and restless want in all the ante-evangelical literature and art. You hear their half-articulated wail, or melancholy undertone, in the Greek tragedies and epics, in the lyric poetry of the east, in the loftier meditations of Athenian and Latin philosophy. The same unsatisfied yearning for truth, for certainty, for consolation, is carved into marble, built into pyramids, and framed into temples."* No one can read carefully the pages of history without being struck with the fact that human nature has frequently aspired after a state which it has found itself utterly incompetent to reach. Again and again have the greatest minds in all ages of the world lamented the failure of man, by any effort that he

* Fitness of Christianity to Man, by Bishop Huntington, p. 68.

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could put forth, to reach the ideal that he had set before himself. Two facts stare us in the face at every point to which we turn in the history of thought in ancient times: these are, first, that an ideal perfection is possible; and, secondly, that every attempt to reach it has proved unsuccessful. Socrates acknowledges the insufficiency of human reason to elevate man to his true position; and his great disciple, Plato, looked forward almost in the spirit of prophecy to a lawgiver who should be sent from heaven, and be more than man. And no doubt, had they lived to see the Divine Legislator who centuries later came, they would have cheerfully sat at His feet, and listened with gratitude to His teaching.

The great want of humanity that had been felt for so many ages, Christianity met. By Christ was the long-felt deficiency supplied. The vacancy in the heart of universal humanity that had been experienced from the beginning of the world was filled by the incarnation. "God manifest in the flesh" was the solution of the problem that had baffled sages, set at nought their philosophy, and bid defiance to the mightiest efforts of human reason. What genius, and culture, and intellect, and ethical codes had all failed to accomplish, the religion of Jesus effected at a stroke. Revelation, and it alone, could teach us our duty to each other, and, what was much more important, our relationship to God.

Intimately connected with the great truth of mediation between God and man stands the foremost doctrine of revelation, the unity of God. "There is one God," says Paul, "and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* God is one, humanity is one; there

* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

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is one salvation offered to all, and there can be but one Mediator standing between the one God and the one humanity. "Seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith," * here stands the first great truth. "And hath made of one blood (or kind) all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," † there is the second. Then there is one Mediator between God and men, which is the next, and the most important of all. The unity of God, the universal brotherhood of man, and the oneness of the Mediator, all rest on the same foundation, and must stand or fall together. There is but one atonement for sin, but that extends to all humanity, for the race of men is one. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." ‡ "And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." § We must pray for all men, love all men, do good to all men, for all are comprehended in God's universal scheme of salvation. God's own unity testifies to the universality of His offer of grace. In the words of Bishop Ellicot: "The universality of the dispensation is proved by the unity of the Dispenser." As there is one God, so there can be but one atonement and one Atoner; and as humanity is united into a grand unity both by creation and by redemption, so the typical man of the race, the representative of all the rest, must be one, and not many.

The unity of God appears to us to be so simple and self-evident a truth, that at the first glance we wonder that

* Rom. iii. 30.
† Acts xvii. 26.
‡ Heb. x. 12.
§ 1 John ii. 2.

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it should be so strongly enforced. As a matter of course, God is one, we say; that is, if there be a God at all. Every one knows there are atheists who deny the Divine existence altogether, but amongst those who believe in a Supreme Being surely no one can doubt His unity. All nature, say you, testifies to the fact that God is one, and not many; and therefore this truth is so obvious that any attempt to prove it looks like so much time wasted. Are there not men in our midst who, denying the supernatural altogether, and rejecting wholly the notion that God can have revealed His will in a book, yet recognise a sort of religion of nature, and even engage in Divine worship, who cling to the truth of the unity of God as tenaciously as we do,—nay, more, who claim to hold it in far greater purity than the most orthodox Christians? Not only is this so, but such persons often describe themselves by a name which arrogantly implies that they have a kind of monopoly in this great truth, and that they alone hold it in its primitive integrity, and preach it in its simplest and most explicit form. But after all it is a truth of revelation, and of revelation alone. The modern advanced Unitarian, or Theist, as he sometimes prefers to be called, prides himself beyond measure on the fact that the oneness of God forms the first and most important article of his faith; yet that truth he would probably never have known but for the Bible which he spurns and the Revelation which he rejects.

It is very questionable whether any man could, even with the aid of the advanced science of to-day, learn the unity of God from a study of the phenomena of nature alone. We see in the wide universe around us on every hand wondrous manifestations of power and of wisdom;

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we are awe-stricken at the extent of the power and the profundity of the wisdom by which it is controlled; but that these spring from one being, and from one only, I doubt if we should ever have guessed had not the information come to us from some other source. In nature there are many powers and forces conflicting with each other, and often apparently carrying on a fierce struggle as to which shall gain the mastery. Winds and waters, and tempests and earthquakes, frost and sunshine, and a score of other forces, are frequently seen arrayed against each other like contending armies in a battle-field. And then there is the perpetual struggle between truth and error, goodness and evil, virtue and vice, moral light and darkness,—all of which would, to the superficial observer at least, seem to point, not to one Supreme Ruler, but to many, whose governments were fiercely contending with each other for victory. True, we feel no difficulty in reconciling all this with the supreme power of one Being who is infinitely wise and holy, but the solution of the problem has come from revelation, not from nature.

None of the ancients, strictly speaking, can be said to have arrived at the conclusion that God was one. Philosophers did not reach this sublime truth, and the founders of the great religions outside of Christianity fell equally short of it. In Brahminism, man was lost in God; in Buddhism, God was lost in man. The former developed into polytheism and idolatry, and the latter into something very much akin to atheism. The religion of Zoroaster, with its sacred book, the Zend-Avesta, proclaimed a dualism in which good and evil, both existing from eternity, carry on an everlasting conflict. In Egypt polytheism reigned, and the Egyptian gods were after-

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wards transferred to Greece. The only religion outside of Christianity that teaches the unity of God is Mohammedanism; but this is not to the point, because Mohammed learned the great truths which he made the basis of his faith from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Perhaps the man who in ancient times came nearest to the sublime doctrine of God's unity was Plato; and he, although he approached it most closely, did not reach it. He may be said to have trodden on the skirts of revelation, but passed away without beholding its face or its form. How much more highly blessed are we whose lot is cast in these modern days, where we live in the full blaze of Gospel day!

"How happy are our ears
That hear this joyful sound!
Which kings and prophets waited for,
And sought, but never found.

How blessèd are our eyes,
That see this heavenly light!
Prophets and kings desired it long,
But died without the sight."

The Jews appear to have been the first people in the world who taught the unity of God. Now, how did they reach a truth which sages and philosophers, and the founders of great religions, had never arrived at? They were by no means an intelligent people; culture and philosophy had no place amongst them; and as original thinkers they stood far below the leading men of many other nations. If by their own unaided intellect they discovered that God was one, then they are entitled to rank above all peoples on the face of the earth. But if that were so, how is it that such vast mental powers did not display themselves in other fields of knowledge? The

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Hebrews have left us no legacy of philosophy or science; and all the literature that they have bequeathed to the world is in the Bible. If this book were the simple outcome of the Jewish mind, why have we not more literature of a similar kind produced by the same people? But there is one fact which proves clearly that the doctrine of the unity of God could not have sprung from the unaided intellect of the Jews, which is that it was completely foreign to their habits of thought. The natural tendency of their minds was towards polytheism and idolatry. Even after they had been so highly favoured of God as to be made the recipients of a supernatural revelation, informing them that they had been singled out from amongst all the people of the world for an especial purpose in the Divine economy, they again and again relapsed into idolatry. The unity of God was a truth so much in opposition to the natural bent of their minds, that it was with the greatest difficulty they could be made to adhere to it. Sometimes heavy judgments had to fall upon them, and terrible punishments to be inflicted, to bring them back from idolatry to the worship of the only God of heaven and earth. The great truth that God was one was made known by revelation, and by revelation only.

There is a singular but very important fact in reference to this doctrine that I may notice here, which is the appropriateness of the name by which God revealed Himself to the Hebrews. I do not think that there is a word in any known language which truly expresses what God is but this one. Our English word God is the same as the German *Gott*, and the Gothic *Guth*, and is allied to the Persian *Khodâ* or *Goda*, and the Hindu *Khudâ;* and

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in these terms we may trace its derivation. It simply means lord, or master. The name of God in almost all the modern continental languages is derived from the Latin *Deus*, from which we get back to the Greek θεος, which simply means "a placer." The Latin and Greek words are not used exclusively to describe God, being often applied to illustrious men. Every one who is familiar with the Greek poets will be aware of this fact. And our Lord, you will remember, speaks of men being called gods (θεοί), to whom the word of God came.* Now, when Moses inquired of the Lord as to what name he should use when speaking to the Israelites of the Divine Person from whom he received his message, God described Himself as, "I AM THAT I AM," which may also be rendered, "I am that which I shall be," or, "I shall be that which I am," beautifully formulated in the sacred name יהוה, which we call Jehovah, but the true pronunciation of which no one now knows. The root of these words is היה, *hayah*, to be, and hence the word means *Being* in the abstract, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος. We have no equivalent word in English for this sacred name, unless we render it "The Self-Existent," "The Infinite," "The Eternal." In the French version, "L'Eternal" is always used, which is a much better rendering than our own. Our Lord in the New Testament describes God as spirit, Πνεῦμα ὁ θεός,—not a spirit, but spirit, absolutely the spirit, showing that He cannot be cognised by an organ of sense.

But why a Mediator? Unbelievers in Divine revelation have often asked the question, why, if a God exists, can we not commune directly with Him, or why

* John x. 34.

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cannot His influence be immediately felt upon the human soul; and if both of these, or either of them, be possible, why a Mediator should be required to stand between God and man. We reply, that God does nfluence man by His Holy Spirit, and that we do commune directly with Him in prayer, and yet a Mediator is essential, no less to the intellectual side of our nature than to our religious life. Has it ever struck you to observe the somewhat paradoxical position that we are placed in with regard to the Infinite? You cannot escape it, and yet it is impossible to comprehend it. Something must have been from all eternity: that is an axiom which no one would ever think of disputing. Whether that something which has existed from all eternity be matter or God is not now the question. I could easily show, were this the occasion to do so, that it cannot be matter, because every part of the material universe is conditioned and limited, and therefore finite.* But something must have always been, or nought had still been. And that which is eternal is infinite,—in duration, at all events. Now let any person try if he can conceive of an eternal existence which had no beginning and can have no end. Bring this truth into the region of the intellect, and there attempt to deal with it, and what will be the result? Why, you will find that not simply the understanding, but even the imagination, will be paralysed in the process. So something must be extended to infinity in regard to space. There can be no end, for that would imply that something was limiting what was thought of; and as that something would extend further, the thought would have to be

* *Vide ante*, Essay on the Folly of Atheism.

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transferred to it, and so on *ad infinitum*, which is, in fact, the very infinity in question. Professor Max Müller has well said, "Man sees—he sees to a certain point; and there his eyesight breaks down. But exactly where his eyesight breaks down, there presses upon him, whether he likes it or not, the perception of the unlimited or the infinite." * The most self-evident truth, therefore, which forces itself into our minds, and which it is impossible for us to escape, is that something exists which is extended to infinity. But we may try all we know to form a clear conception of this something; and although we had intellectual faculties a thousand times greater than those of Plato, or Newton, or Kant, or all combined, we should fail—utterly fail. The finite cannot comprehend the infinite; yet believe in it, it must, by the very necessity of the laws of existence. What, then, is the inference to be drawn from this fact? Let us see. If the one Infinite Being be God, as it most assuredly is, the application of this truth is important in the extreme. Sir Isaac Newton, speaking of Deity, says, "He is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite. He is not duration and space, but has duration of existence, and is present; by existing always and everywhere, He constitutes duration and space, eternity and infinity. Since every part of space and every individual moment of duration is everywhere certainty, the Maker and Lord of all things cannot be said to be in no time and in no space. He is omnipresent, not by His power only, but in His very substance, for power cannot subsist without substance. God is not at all affected by the motions of bodies, neither do they find any resistance from His Omnipresence. He

* Contemporary Review, vol. xxxii., p. 227.

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necessarily exists, and by the same necessity He exists always and everywhere. Whence also it follows that He is all similar—all eye—all ear—all brain—all arm—all sensation—all understanding—all active power; but this, not in a human or corporeal, but in a manner wholly unknown to us."* It will be seen, therefore, that unless some special revelation of God be made to man, all human beings must remain in utter ignorance of His nature, and the only worship possible will be that which St. Paul discovered at Athens offered at the shrine of "The Unknown God," a worship which modern sceptical thought is doing much to revive.

But humanity sustains some sort of relationship to God, and owes some kind of allegiance to Him. It is essential, therefore, for our well-being—nay, for our very purpose in life—that we should learn what this is. For unless we can do so, we are groping our way in the dark, and must be like so many vessels at sea tossed about by a tempestuous storm, and destitute alike of chart, compass, and rudder.

In addition to the defects of the intellect which separate us from God, there is another and a yet more serious one. Man has fallen, and by his sins and his vices has alienated himself further from the Holy One. There is, consequently, a great yawning chasm between us all and the Heavenly Father, which, when we look into, we are awe-stricken and terrified. No mortal being can bridge that gulf; and unless something, therefore, be done to aid us, we must remain for ever separated from Him who gave us birth, sustains us every moment, and can alone satisfy the deep, heartfelt wants of our spiritual nature.

* Principia.

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It is a startling fact that all nations have either sought for a mediator, or degraded their deities down to a level which they could approach. And this course they found necessary in order to bring their worship within the sphere of their understanding. It seems to have been a recognised truth in all the great religions that Deity in His Divine Essence cannot be known, and that therefore some inferior being must stand between Him and the worshipper. In Brahminism, Pari-Brahm, the supreme God, is not worshipped; all devotions are paid to three inferior deities, named Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu. In Buddhism, no worship is offered to the infinite Nirvana, nor to the mighty Adi-Buddha, but to the inferior Buddhas, and to Sakya-Muni, the founder of the religion, and simply a man. In the religion of Zoroaster, Zerana-Akerana is so far removed from everything finite, that no worshipper approaches him; the objects of devotion here are two smaller and antagonistic deities, called Ormuzd and Ahriman. One of these presides over all that is good, and the other over everything that is evil; and they are equally powerful, and always in conflict. With the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, and the Scandinavians, the supreme deity was simply *primus inter pares*—the first among equals. This was the part played by Zeus, Jupiter, and Odin, neither of whom had infinite powers ascribed to him. The want of a mediator seems always to have been felt where the Infinite was believed in. Religions outside of the influence of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures appear to have generally "vibrated between a personal God, the object of worship who was limited and finite, and an infinite, absolute Being who was out of sight, whose veil no one had lifted.

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The peculiarity of the Mosaic religion was to make God truly the One alone, and at the same time truly the object of worship."* And Christ came as the incarnation of God to make Deity known to man, and to open up a way to the Infinite.

In the Old Testament, all the manifestations of God were made through a chosen medium or mediator. And the ancient Jewish Church recognised a Divine person under the name of *Mimra*—a term having the same meaning as the *Logos*, or Word, of the New Testament. The Eternal and Infinite God could never be seen by mortal eyes. "No man," says our Lord, "hath seen God at any time." Yet in the Old Testament Scriptures there are numerous instances given of the visible appearance of Jehovah. Is this contradictory? By no means. God in His Divine Essence cannot be seen; "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him;"† but the *Mimra*, or Word, was seen and heard and spoken with on many occasions. Modern Jews do not believe in this Divine *Mimra*, but herein they show to what an extent they have departed from the primitive and pure faith of their fathers. Their ancient commentators, or Targumists, as they are called, are clear and explicit enough upon the subject. The Chaldee paraphrases abound with references to this great and mighty person. From them we learn that it was the *Mimra*, or Word, that always appeared under the name of the angel of the Lord; and they, as well as the Scriptures, ascribe to this Being Divine honours, and call Him by the sacred, awful, and incommunicable name of

* Ten Great Religions, by J. Freeman Clarke, p. 502.

† John i. 18.

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Jehovah. Hundreds of passages could be quoted from the Targums to prove this, if I had the space. Suffice it to say that it was the Word, or *Mimra*, who spoke to Adam in the Garden of Eden; who appeared to Abraham in the door of his tent; who led Israel in the pillar of a cloud; who shut the door of the ark on Noah; who wrought miracles through Moses; who destroyed Sodom; who punished Israel for making the golden calf; who made man after His own image; and by whom, in fact, the world was created. What a marvellous uniformity we see between the teaching of the ancient Jews and the New Testament, although now Judaism has become so terribly corrupted. The Jerusalem Targum says that God created the world by His Wisdom—that is, the Logos; for so Philo, also a Jew, explains it. And Paul, speaking of Christ, says, "by whom also He made the worlds."

The doctrine of a Mediator, it will be seen, was taught in the Old Testament and recognised by the ancient Jewish Church, but of course received its full development under the New Testament dispensation. With Christ came in the full clear light of Gospel day; and what had previously been but dimly seen, now became bright as the noonday sun. The glory of heaven shone upon the earth, and its golden beams illumined all meaner things.

"The hour that saw from opening heaven
Redeeming glory stream,
Beyond the summer hues of even,
Beyond the midday beam.
Thenceforth to eyes of high desire
The meanest things below,
As with a seraph's robe of fire
Invested, burn and glow."

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Having seen the necessity for a mediator between God and men, the question that arises is as to the character of the mediator required. Modern Theists tell us that we can see enough of God in His works to learn to worship and adore Him. His glory, say they, shines out resplendently in suns and stars, and trees and flowers, and rolling waters and grassy meads. The thunder and lightning, the earthquake and the tornado, all proclaim His power; whilst His wisdom is seen in every plant that grows and every animal that moves, from the huge elephant and the colossal whale, down to the ephemeral insect buzzing on the wing, and the simplest infusorial animacule in a drop of water. All this is true, but we want to know more of God than these can tell us. The physical universe will not serve the purpose of a mediator between God and men, for many reasons. In the first place, we do not see it as it is, for the shadow of man's sin is thrown upon all that he gazes upon. We see in nature just what we bring to nature the capacity for seeing. Everything appears to us according to our states of mind. No one of us sees things as they are beheld by another. The poet and the painter revel in some grand piece of scenery, feeling their souls stirred to the utmost depths, whilst a commonplace man of a low and grovelling mind fails to detect either grandeur or beauty. We all see nature through the darkness of our sinful state, and fail to catch the glory and the beauty that would otherwise appear. Secondly, material nature does not come near enough to man to mediate between him and God. Whatever occupies the position of a mediator must be capable of being loved; for that which cannot receive love, and give out love, cannot transmit love.

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You can only love that which is capable of loving you in return; and trees and flowers, and suns and stars, are not capable of doing this. None of the things in the physical universe can, consequently, become the vehicle through which Divine love can flow down to man. The mediator must be sought elsewhere than in external nature.

Can a man mediate? Alas, no. He cannot mediate for himself, much less for others. The chasm between God and man is an infinite one, and that chasm must be spanned by him who would act the part of a mediator. Let a human being be as pure as an angel, and gigantic in intellect as an archangel, he cannot bridge that tremendous and awful gulf. The mightiest and loftiest created being that God has made, the bright spirit who stands nearest to the throne of the Almighty, is incompetent to the task. He who takes upon himself the office of mediator must stand on the level of both the opposing parties. The word translated mediator in the text is Μεσίτης; literally, one who stands between—a go-between, an umpire, a stake-holder, an interpreter, a peace-maker. The Divine peace-maker must stand on my level on one side, and on the other must reach up to the Infinite. He must share my nature, and yet must be divine; in a word, he must be God and man. No one else can perform the task; no one else can bridge the chasm between the infinite and the finite.

> "Hold up thy mirror to the sun,
> And thou shalt need an angel's gaze,
> So perfectly the polished stone
> Gives back the glory of his rays.

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Turn it, and it shall paint as true
The soft green of the vernal earth ;
And each small flower of bashful hue,
That closest hides its lowly birth.
Our mirror is a blessèd book,
Whence out from each illumined page
We see one glorious image look,
All eyes to dazzle and engage,—
The Son of God : and that indeed
We see Him as He is, we know,
Since in the same bright glass we read
The very life of things below." *

Next as to the Mediator provided by Christianity. "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus." Thus, it will be seen, that it is humanity after all that mediates,—but it is the humanity of God. It is not every man, but the man Christ Jesus,—the man who is God's fellow, the man whose nature opens both ways—to God on one side, and to the lowest of us on the human plane on the other. "It is not," says an American divine,† recently passed away from earth, "some tall angel talking to us from a distance, out of the porches of heaven, but some one clothed in our nature, touching the earth in its lowest place of evil and darkness, and at the same time touching the inmost heaven where all the divine scenery lay upon his soul,—not sinful humanity that cuts off the light rather than transmits it, but one supremely perfect, through whose translucency the whole Divine nature is imaged forth." "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" Glorious and heavenly

* Keble.

† Dr. E. H. Sears.

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words are these, coming to man like water to a thirsty soul, or food to one who is perishing of hunger.

Jesus Christ is not one of many mediators, but the one Mediator. He stands alone. Even sceptics have admitted that His character was *unique*, and unique it most unquestionably was. He was the typical man of the race; all the virtues of all the ages were gathered up and centered in Him. It was necessary that the Mediator should be a man sympathising with men through an experimental knowledge of human nature. To this end the Lord of life and glory stooped from heaven to earth, left His throne above, where angels and archangels bowed before Him, and acknowledged His Divine power, to take up His abode with sinful, fallen, and disobedient man. "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham."* Passing by all the hierarchy of heaven, from the highest created spirit down to the lowest of the angelic host, He came to man, and Himself became man, in order to open up a way from humanity to God. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same."† His Divinity became enshrined in flesh; and we beheld His glory, and saw as much of God as human sight could endure.

"The Son of God in glory beams,
Too bright for eyes to scan;
But we can face the light that gleams
From the mild Son of man."

Too much importance cannot be attached to the fact that the Mediator was a man—although more than man. Whatever reverence or awe we may experience when we

* Heb. ii. 16. † Heb. ii. 14.

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contemplate the Divine side of the Lord's nature, that side which is described as "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person,"*—and reverence and awe we must feel when we fix our eyes upon this fountain of life and light,—we should never forget that the Mediator was human as well as Divine, that He had a nature like our own, that all that belongs to man —sin only excepted—was found in Him, that His griefs and sorrows, joys and gladnesses, pains and pleasures, were all such as we meet with in humanity at large. He knows our wants and our weaknesses, our struggles with sin, our conflicts with the devil, our strong passions, strangely blended with loving sympathies and aspirations after good. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."† Flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, there beats in His Divine breast a great human heart, full of human sympathy, joined with Divine love:

> "He knows what sore temptations mean,
> For He has felt the same."

The Mediator was the man Christ Jesus, and by that manhood is humanity raised up to God, and God brought down to earth. We see God, not as a cold, impassive Being reposing upon the icy peaks of eternity, and moving a huge mechanism of worlds by some stern, unbending process, and still less as an unconscious Force, or an imaginary "stream of tendency;" but we behold him as a loving Parent, whose Divine compassion extends to all that His hands have made, and is moved at every pulse

* Heb. i. 2. † Heb. iv. 15.

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of woe in His universe. In that incarnation humanity became Divine, and with the Divine humanity came Divine sorrows, Divine griefs, and Divine sympathies, which run down to every soul of man, and share in our smallest sufferings. The one Peacemaker is sufficient for us in all the ills and trials of life. Our very helplessness brings Him nearer to us. Our efforts after good, and our struggles with evil, even when unsuccessful, He does not disregard, and our keenest afflictions He makes His own.

What could we ever have known of God but for the Mediator provided by Him? Science might have told us of a great force issuing out from some centre, and developing worlds and men by a wild and purposeless process of Evolution, leaving us like straws on the surface of a troubled lake, or foam on the waves of a stormy sea, drifted hither and thither, with no plan and no power of self-direction. Philosophy might have informed us that there was somewhere an infinite and eternal Being, but that He must ever remain enshrouded in mystery so great that any attempt to know Him was more futile than the effort of an insect to understand the integral calculus, and any conception that we might form of Him wild as a madman's dream. But the incarnation brought God within the sphere of human cognition, declared to us what was our relationship to Him, pointed out how deeply and tenderly He loved us, and opened up the road by which we can make our way to His presence, to dwell with Him for ever. God is no longer an unknown quantity to be discussed by sages, talked of in mystic jargon by philosophers, pooh-poohed by men who arrogantly style themselves thinkers, and relegated

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to the region of the unknowable by scientists. He is an infinite Person, full of infinite love, whose character is infinite holiness, and whose goodness knows no bound. He is our Father, and we are His children. Human beings are not poor orphans tossed by chance into the great vortex of nature, to be dashed about for a time, and then destroyed without pity; but heirs to an immortality whose blessedness is higher than thought can conceive of or imagination depict. "There is one God;" that is a truth incomparably great; but far more important and more glorious to us is what follows,—"and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

"One name above all glorious names,
With its ten thousand tongues,
The everlasting sea proclaims,
Echoing angelic songs."

"The man Christ Jesus." The entire fulness of that name will never be thoroughly unfolded through all the ages of eternity. It is the embodiment of all we know of God's boundless love, everlasting mercy, and matchless grace. It shines brighter than the stars, and glows more gloriously than the sun. Angels prostrate themselves before it, and to it every knee shall bow. The man Christ Jesus has a name above every name. He is called "Wonderful, Councillor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." He sits on the throne of the universe, but withal that let us never forget that He was the man Christ Jesus, for herein lies the scheme of redemption and of mediation. He is the Alpha and Omega, who was, and is, and is to come; but still it was as man that He appeared in our midst, bringing

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the glories of heaven to earth, and raising up man to heaven. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." All praise and dominion to Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.—AMEN.

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Appendix.

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APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—DENIAL OF GOD'S EXISTENCE (page 7).

MODERN Atheists frequently declare that they do not deny the existence of God, and that to describe them as doing so is to misrepresent them. Their position, they tell us, is that of having no belief or disbelief on the subject. They do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to be obtained of God's existence, and hence they maintain that they know nothing, and can know nothing, of the matter. This is Agnosticism rather than Atheism. It is by no means true, however, that some of them do not flatly deny the existence of God. In the *National Reformer* of August 18, 1872, the editor replies to a correspondent signing himself "W. W.," Liverpool, as follows: "An Atheist denies the existence of God." Mr. G. J. Holyoake says of Richard Carlile that he reached the climax of his Atheism on the title-page of the tenth volume of the *Republican*, when he declared, "There is no such God in existence as any man has preached, nor any kind of God." ("Life of Carlile," page 24.) The late Mr. John Watts wrote: "To speak of a First Cause is only to indulge in Christian babblement." ("Logic and Philosophy of Atheism," p. 6.) The late Robert Cooper wrote: "I reject the theory of God, because it is not a fact." ("Popular Development of Atheism," p. 7.) This is a curiously-worded phrase, and shows what a fog the man's mind was in. It literally means that he rejected the theory because the said theory was not a fact, as though some theories were facts. What he intends to say is, I suppose, that the existence of God is not a fact, which is assuredly a denial of that existence.

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NOTE B.—INERTIA (page 14).

Occasionally some of the atheistic lecturers, when driven into a corner, will flatly deny that inertia is a property of matter. One of them with whom I recently debated in the North did this before a large audience. Another has done it in print in a tract entitled, "Has Man a Soul?" When men are so egregiously ignorant of the first rudiments of scientific knowledge as this fact proves such persons to be, they are hardly worth replying to. Yet as there are large numbers of working men who listen to their harangues, and who, not being educated themselves, become misled by them, it may be as well to give the following method adapted by Professor Challis (Professor of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy in the University of Cambridge) for demonstrating inertia. He remarks: "That the quality of inertia is recognisable by the senses may be shown by such an experiment as the following: Conceive to be placed on a perfectly smooth horizontal plane a perfectly smooth sphere, and suppose the sphere to be pushed with the *hand* so as to be made to move in a straight course on the plane (without rolling) with a certain uniformly accelerated motion during a certain interval of time. This might practically be done, with sufficient accuracy for the purposes of experiment, by regulating the motion communicated to the sphere by the hand, so that it shall be parallel and equal to the motion of another sphere (which might be called a pilot sphere), the latter having been caused to move by *mechanical* arrangement in the above specified manner. Let the same thing be done with spheres of the same material, of twice, three times the size of the first, and in each case let the motion be regulated by the *same motion* of the pilot sphere. Then it would certainly be *felt* that the motion of the sphere was in each instance produced by a *personal effort*, and it would be perceived that the effort was greater the greater the size of the sphere, the effect of friction being assumed to be inconsiderable. The experiment might even suggest that the effort was in exact

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proportion to the size of the sphere; but it is not adopted to *prove* this law, the evidence of which, as will be stated subsequently, rests on different grounds. It proves, however, that the motion of the sphere was accelerated by a *personal effort* consciously exercised. Now, the *inertia* may be defined to be the quality which, under the given circumstances, necessitated the effort employed to accelerate its motion. Hence we may draw the noteworthy conclusion that *the reality of inertia as a quality* pertaining to bodies is recognisable by a sense of personal effort." ("Tran. Vict. Inst.," vol. xi., p. 202.)

NOTE C.—FORCE IDENTICAL WITH WILL (page 18).

The Rev. J. P. Kirkman, F.R.S., in his admirable work entitled "Philosophy without Assumptions," has laid down the following propositions:—

a. The only force which is directly given, and immediately known to me, is my own will force; and all my knowledge of other forces acting in the cosmos is mediate, and found by logical inference.

b. My will-force is my only force-finder; that is, the only power that can find with demonstration, so that I can show you how to find.

c. In every train of reasoned thought about any force or forces found in action in the cosmos, the fundamental proposition out of which all my other propositions flow, and on the certainty of which their truth to me depends, is this: In finding force, *I will in act, and I know* that I will; so that if all the steps of the reasoning be written down without omission in their order, this proposition must stand written at the head of all. *In first finding force in this inquiry, I willed in act, and knew that I willed.*

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NOTE D.—ATOMS AND CHANCE (page 31).

I sing of Atoms, whose creative brain
With eddying impulse built new Drury Lane ;
Not to the labours of subservient man,—
To no young Wyatt appertains the plan ;
We mortals stalk, like horses in a mill,
Impassive media of Atomic will.
Ye stare ! then Truth's broad talisman discern,
'Tis Demonstration speaks—attend and learn.

From floating elements in chaos hurled,
Self-formed of atoms sprang the infant world.
No great *first cause* inspired the happy plot ;
But all was matter, and no matter what.
Atoms, attracted by some law occult,
Settling in spheres, the globe was the result.
Pure child of Chance, which still directs the ball,
As rotatory atoms rise or fall.
In æther launched, the peopled bubble floats
A mass of particles and confluent motes,
So nicely poised that, if one atom flings
Its weight away, aloft the planet springs,
And wings its course thro' realms of boundless space,
Outstripping comets in eccentric race.
Add but one atom more, it sinks outright
Down to the realms of Tartarus and night.
What waters melt or scorching fires consume
In different forms their being reassume ;
Hence can no change arise, except in name,
For weight and substance ever are the same.

Thus with the flames that from Old Drury rise,
Its elements primeval sought the skies ;
There pendulous to wait the happy hour
When new attractions should restore their power ;

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So in this procreant theatre elate
Echoes unborn their future life await :
Her embryo sounds in æther lie concealed,
Like words in northern atmosphere congealed ;
Here many a fœtus-laugh and half-encore
Clings to the roof or creeps along the floor.
By puffs concipient some in æther flit,
And soar in bravos from the thundering pit ;
Some forth on ticket-nights from tradesmen break
To mar the actor they desire to make ;
While some this mortal life abortive miss,
Crushed by a groan or strangled by a hiss.
So when "dog's-meat" re-echoes through the streets,
Rush sympathetic dogs from their retreats,
Beam with bright blaze their supplicating eyes,
Sink their hind legs, ascend their joyful cries;
Each wild with hope, and maddening to prevail,
Points the pleased ear and wags th' expectant tail.

Ye fallen bricks, in Drury's fire calcined,
Since doomed to slumber couched upon the wind,
Sweet was the hour when, tempted by your freaks,
Congenial trowels smoothed your yellow cheeks,
Float dulcet serenades upon the ear,
Bends every atom from its ruddy sphere,
Twinkles each eye, and, peeping from its veil,
Marks in adverse crowd its destined male.
The oblong beauties clap their hands of grit,
And brick-dust tilterings on the breezes flit ;
Then down they rush in amatory race,
Their dusty bridegrooms eager to embrace.
Some choose old lovers, some decide for new ;
But each, when fixed, is to her station true.
Thus various bricks are made as tastes invite,
The red, the grey, the dingy, or the white.

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Perhaps some half-baked rover, frank and free,
To alien beauty bends the lawless knee;
But, of unhallowed fascinations sick,
Soon quits his Cyprian for his married brick.
The Dido atom calls and scolds in vain,—
No crisp Æneas soothes the widow's pain.
So in Cheapside, what time Aurora peeps,
A mingled noise of dustman, milk, and sweeps
Falls on the housemaid's ear. Amazed, she stands,
Then opes the door with cinder-sabled hands,
And "matches" calls. The dustman, bubbled flat,
Thinks 'tis for him, and doffs his fantailed hat;
The milkman, whom her second cries assail,
With sudden sink unyokes the clinking pail.
Now louder grown, by turns she screams and weeps.
Alas! her screaming only brings the sweeps.
Sweeps but put out, she wants to raise, a flame,
And calls for matches, but 'tis still the same.
Atoms and housemaids, mark the moral true—
If once you go astray, no *match* for you.

As atoms in one mass united mix,
So bricks attraction feel for kindred bricks;
Some in the cellar vein, perchance, on high,
Fair chimney chums on beds of mortar lie:
Enamoured of the sympathetic clod,
Leaps the red bridegroom to the labourer's hod,
And up the ladder bears the workman taught
To think he bears the bricks—mistaken thought!
A proof behold—If near the top they find
The nymphs or broken-cornered or unkind,
Back to the bottom, leaping with a bound,
They bear their bleeding carriers to the ground.

So legends tell, along the lofty hill
Paced the twin heroes, gallant Jack and Jill;

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On trudged the Gemini to reach the rail
That shields the well's top from the expectant pail,
When, ah ! Jack falls ; and, rolling in the rear,
Jill feels the attraction of his kindred sphere ;
Head over heels begins his toppling track,
Throws sympathetic somersets with Jack,
And at the mountain's base bobs plump against him,
whack !

Ye living atoms, who unconscious sit
Jumbled by chance in gallery, box, and pit,
For you no Peter opes the fabled door,
No churlish Charon plies the shadowy oar.
Breathe but a space, and Boreas' casual sweep
Shall beat you scattered corses o'er the deep
To gorge the greedy elements, and mix
With water, marl, and clay, and stones, and sticks ;
While, charged with fancied souls, sticks, stones, and
clay,
Shall take your seats, and hiss or clap the play.

O happy age ! when convert Christians read
No sacred writings but the Pagan creed ;
O happy age ! when, spurning Newton's dreams,
Our poets' sons recite Lucretian themes,
Abjure the idle systems of their youth,
And turn again to atoms and to truth !
O happier still, when England's dauntless dames,
Awed by no chaste alarms, no latent shames,
The bard's fourth book unblushingly peruse,
And learn the rampant lessons of the stews !

Hazell, Watson, and Viney, Printers, London and Aylesbury.

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